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THE COMPLETE WORKS
OF
JOHN KEATS

IN FIVE VOLUMES

VOL. IV.

THE COMPLETE WORKS
OF
Agent for London.

—
R. BRIMLEY JOHNSON,
8 York Buildings,
Adelphi, W.C.

VOL. IV.

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EDITED BY
H. B. DUTTON FORMAN.

• VOL. IV. •
LETTERS • 1814 TO
• JANUARY 1819 •

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JOHN
KEATS

VOL. IV.
LETTERS • 1814 TO
JANUARY 1819

H. DUTTON FORMAN.

WILLIAMS & GRAY, GLASGOW.
MAR. 15. 1901.

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PREFACE TO THE LETTERS.

BY THE EDITOR.

This edition of the Letters of John Keats contains in all 217 letters or parts of letters. Those which are fragments are but few: on the other hand there are several each of which would have been many letters but for scarcity of opportunities for despatch to America. These are the journal letters to George Keats and his wife. A large number of the letters appear in no other English edition save my Library edition and illustrated one-volume edition published by Messrs. Reeves and Turner; and two—one to Horace Smith and one to Brown—appear now for the first time. Of the sources of the letters information is given in the general preface prefixed to Volume I. In this place a few words concerning Keats as a letter-writer are needed. If to be true, interesting, attractive, witty, humorous, idealistic, realistic, speculative, discursive, and gossippy in turns is the note of a good letter-writer, then indeed Keats was one. If to tell one's friends just what they want to know about one's doings and thoughts, and about the doings and thoughts of mutual friends, is to be a good letter-writer—that is where Keats, of all men of genius in the last century, excelled. If consideration for the feelings of others in the manner and degree of communicating misfortunes or disagreeables be an epistolary virtue, Keats was largely dowered with that virtue. If to present a true picture of the essential qualities of one's personality is a valuable art, Keats manifested that art in a high form in his letters. And if, when wrung by disease and misery, it is better to leave some record for a pitying posterity than to carry a ghastly secret into the oblivion of the grave, then in this also Keats exceeded others who have made the world richer with their letters. Lastly, the man is not dissociated from the poet in them. Not only is the poetic mode of thought frequently the ruling mode in the prose fabric of these letters; but they are set with gems of verse of all waters, dashed in just as they were composed, a part of the man's life enacting and reflected throughout, and ranging in quality from the merest doggerel calculated to fatten by laughter ("Laugh and grow fat!") to the very masterpieces of poetic craft by which Keats has most blessed his race. It is a far cry from

Two or three Posies
With two or three simples—

O what can ail thee Knight at arms
Alone and palely loitering?

But true it is that, in reading Keats's letters with a fresh eye, one never knows whether the next precious stone one comes to, embedded in one of his racy, lively, inimitably good-tempered and well-conditioned prose pages, will be of the one mood or the other.

In order that the two volumes of letters may be complete in themselves, the poems with which he interspersed his familiar letters are here given in the form in which he wrote them, whether drafts or revisions, although they all appear in their final form in the three volumes of poetry. "Complete," indeed, is a dangerous word to use about such a collection; for here there is no demonstrable finality. To-day one's edition is complete: to-morrow it may be incomplete by the discovery of one more letter—the next day still further from completeness by a fresh find. But at all events there is no letter of Keats ever seen by me which is not included in this edition; and it is doubtful whether much of consequence remains to find.

One of the chief distinctive features of this and my illustrated edition is the insertion of the letters to Fanny Brawne in the order of their production as nearly as it can be ascertained. It is this that accounts for the greater part of the disparity, though not by any means the whole of it, between the hundred and sixty-four letters forming Mr. Colvin's edition and the two hundred and seventeen contained in this volume.

I still think Keats's letters without those to Fanny Brawne very much like 'Hamlet' without the Prince of Denmark. When I made up my mind, after weighing the whole matter carefully, to publish those letters in 1878, I was fully alive to the risk of vituperation, and not unduly solicitous on that score. The press turned out to be about equally divided on it: to one half those letters were "the greatest treasure offered to the reading public for many years," and so on: to the other half their publication was an outrage unheard of; and they "signified the same in the usual manner." The friendly acclamations, and still more the personal expression of views from those whom I knew and valued, were thankfully received. As to the vituperations, one thought of the celebrated anathema recorded in 'The Jackdaw of Rheims,' and came to the conclusion that that memorable occasion was not the only one on which "Nobody seemed one penny the worse."

To return to that sober seriousness which befits the occasion,—the Letters to Fanny Brawne, as here placed side by side with those to Fanny Keats and other correspondents of the poet, are specially commended to such readers in the new century as care to know Keats thoroughly in all moods of his mind and all phases of his temper. There is nothing for any one to be afraid of—nothing that any man or woman need blush to have overheard through that good hap which preserved these records. Above all, the letters are irrevocably with us; and, being with us, they complete the picture of the true Keats. Taken in their proper context, they redound to his honour. That a man placed as he was, endowed by nature as he was, refined by art as he was, and tortured by bodily disease and mental agony as he was, should yet mingle with the bitterness of his cry of despair such sweetness

and sanity as are the ruling characteristics throughout the letters even to Fanny Brawne, is a standing wonder.

To give the reader of these letters that material ease which is his due, it has been arranged for the poetry to be printed, as in the illustrated edition, in the same type as the prose, instead of being set smaller in accordance with the current heresy of printing-houses. The text has been carefully gone over afresh wherever revision or verification was necessary; and I have once more to thank Mr. Colvin for courteously allowing me to refer to the important Keats Manuscripts in his hands. By this means I have been enabled to amend some flaws, especially in the text of the interspersed poems. I have also to thank the Earl of Crewe for allowing me access to the Houghton Papers.

It has seemed to me in preparing this edition that readers would wish to know more about Keats's correspondents than can reasonably be told in foot-notes—how their ages compared with his, who their parents were and whence they came, what they had done or were doing when he became acquainted with them, and what was the after career of those who outlived him, as indeed all did with the sole exception of his brother Tom. It is with the object of satisfying this need as far as possible that I have supplemented by means of the following Biographical Memoranda the information to be gathered from the letters themselves and my own foot-notes. To some of these Memoranda I would gladly add a few exact details if they were forthcoming.

H. B. F.

46 Marlborough Hill, St. John's Wood, London.

February 1901.



BIOGRAPHICAL MEMORANDA

CONCERNING

KEATS'S CORRESPONDENTS.

GEORGE KEATS.

George Keats was born on the 28th of February 1797, and brought up with his brother, in the circumstances detailed in the memoir prefixed to this edition,—being with him at Mr. Clarke's school. He was afterwards occupied for a time in the office of their guardian, Richard Abbey, tea merchant of Pancras Lane and of Walthamstow. There is little to record of his early life beyond what appears in the letters of the poet, as here set out and annotated. The summer visit to Paris with his invalid brother Tom and the winter flight to Teignmouth (1817-18) are the most important incidents apart from his courtship of Georgiana Wylie, whom he married in June 1818 and took to America. Thither he took what he could of the small fortune which came to him from his grandmother, and, settling at Louisville in Kentucky, fought out the battle of life till he realized a fortune and reared a family. Once only before his brother's death he came on a brief business visit to London (January 1820); and that was the last occasion on which he saw anything of his English kith and kin. Brown and Severn blamed him for not giving help to John out of the money he took away in 1820; but Dilke, the shrewdest and most judicious of the friends of Keats, regarded George's case for his own defence as clearly established. Moreover, George paid his brother's debts scrupulously, before the time came when he lost the fortune he had acquired. Some recollections of him by the Rev. James Freeman Clarke, and selections from his letters, are given in the Library edition of Keats's Works. His personality stands out as that of a manly and high-minded fellow; and I for one have long ago dismissed the accusations of Brown and Severn as the outcome of prejudice and restricted knowledge. I would gladly know something of the cause of his death in 1842; but I have not been able, so far, to ascertain the circumstances in which he died. George Keats left his widow with many children, of whom the eldest, called by her parents Emily, the

Little child

O' the western wild,

apostrophised in the poem at pages 183-4 of this volume, was married to a Mr.

Speed, and was the mother of Mr. J. G. Speed, whose selections from Keats's writings are referred to under the numbers 50 and 51 in the List of Works Consulted (Volume I, pages xx and xxi).

THOMAS KEATS.

Of Thomas Keats it is to be recorded that he also received his education at Mr. Clarke's school, was employed for a time in Mr. Abbey's office, was instrumental in bringing into the Keats story Charles Wells, a school-fellow of his but not of his elder brothers', and was the cause also of the rupture between Keats and Wells which led to the most acrimonious utterances that we have from the poet. Wells and some accomplice fabricated a correspondence indicating that a fictitious lady ("Amena") was in love with Tom, whose chagrin on the discovery of the deception put upon him had a prejudicial effect on his already desperate state. He died of consumption at Hampstead in the night of the 1st-2nd of December 1818. His brother George stated that there was no man living who understood John as well as Tom did: let us not forget this when we think of the poor lad buried in the Church of St. Stephen, Coleman Street, in the heart of our vast city of London.

FRANCES MARY KEATS.

Keats's only sister, always called Fanny, was born on the 3rd of June 1803, and after the death of her grandmother Jennings in December 1814 was looked after by Mr. and Mrs. Abbey when not at school. The addresses of Keats's letters to her show four names of schoolmistresses, but only in reality, I think, two schools. We have Miss Tuckey, Miss Tucker, Miss Kaley and Miss Caley. I suspect that there were really two schools—Miss Tucker's and Miss Caley's, and that after being moved from Miss Tucker's to Miss Caley's, the child returned to Miss Tucker's. In the Abbey household she had ample opportunity to learn self-control in difficult conditions. On attaining the age of 21 she had to invoke the aid of the law in order to extort from Abbey her share of her grandmother's money. In this she was assisted by the intrepid Dilke. In 1826 she married an accomplished Spanish gentleman, Señor Valentin Llanos, who spoke and wrote English well, distinguished himself in the diplomatic service of his country, and was the author of 'Don Esteban' and 'Sandoval the Freemason,' works of fiction 'with a purpose' on the liberal side in politics. Of this marriage there were four children, two sons and two daughters. One of the sons entered the civil service of Spain: the other, Don Juan Llanos y Keats, became a painter of distinction. Of the daughters, the Señorita Rosa attained to be an excellent musician: she had when I saw her a certain facial resemblance to the poet. The other daughter, the Countess Blockman, was widowed when I visited the family in Madrid several years since. Her daughter Elena was practising as a portrait-painter; she had a striking personality and very promising talents. Señora Llanos was greatly respected, and was an excellent manager in trying circumstances. Late in life, being less affluent than formerly, she allowed me to put in motion the necessary machinery for bringing her case before the first Lord of the Treasury for the grant of a Civil

List pension. A moderate pension was awarded on Lord Beaconsfield's recommendation, and was of material assistance in her latter years. Señor Llanos died on the 14th of August 1885, aged nearly ninety,—Señora Llanos on the 16th of December 1889, after a very short illness.

Keats's words about his sister's striking likeness to their brother Tom perhaps made one prone to find the resemblance! I certainly thought that she had a look, even in old age, of Severn's water-colour sketch of Tom; and a portrait of her painted for me by her son Don Juan conveys perennially the same impression. The poet, as we know, was short, with a good chest and shoulders, whereas Brown (Houghton papers) records that Tom was "very tall and very narrow chested." I have seen no portrait representing their sister in youth. In middle life and old age she was a tall, erect, and well-developed woman. She deemed the portrait of her brother which Severn exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1819 an excellent likeness. She possessed one of the many replicas; and of this her grand-daughter Elena made for me an excellent copy in oils (not, of course, to be confused with the exquisite replica formerly owned by Thomas and Jane Hood now in my collection). Señora Llanos always held that her illustrious brother's *vera effigies* was only to be seen in perfection in the life-mask made by Haydon, of which she had a cast always by her. To illustrate this view she coöperated with her son Juan, or John as she sometimes called him, in posing the mask to the best advantage, and lovingly superintended the work while he made from it a delicate oil miniature in *grisaille* which she sent to me in a letter in the early days of our correspondence,—to remain among the most treasurable objects in my collection.

GEORGIANA AUGUSTA WYLIE,
afterwards Keats, and lastly Jeffrey.

Georgiana Augusta, George Keats's wife, was the daughter of a naval officer of the name of Wylie. Unfortunately the details of her antecedents are but scanty. The reader will have learnt from pages xxxi, xxxiv and xxxv in the Memoir prefixed to Volume I that she counted for a great deal in the life of Keats at its healthiest period; and readers of the letters will see how much she went for later on, and as long as Keats could keep up any kind of interest in life. Her mother, also among the poet's correspondents, does not stand clearly before us; and I regret the shadowiness of her personality arising from lack of material to bring it before the reader. After George Keats's death his widow married Mr. John Jeffrey, who furnished Lord Houghton with much invaluable material, grossly mishandled, but rather through lack of aptness than want of goodwill. Mr. and Mrs. Jeffrey are no longer living. The Keats manuscripts in George's hands underwent gradual distribution, and will be found referred to in numerous places throughout these volumes.

CHARLES COWDEN CLARKE.

Charles Cowden Clarke was born on the 15th of December 1787, at Enfield, where his father, John Clarke, kept a school. When Keats came to the school as

a child of six or seven, young Clarke, fourteen or fifteen years old, gave him much of the elementary part of his education, helping later to form his tastes. Clarke was devoted to music, and an enthusiastic play-goer, his prime histrionic favourites being Edmund Kean, Mrs. Siddons, and Miss O'Neill. At the time of his literary *début*, in Leigh Hunt's 'Literary Pocket Book,' he was living at Ramsgate, whither his parents had moved on giving up the school. Returning to London after his father's death (1820), he started as a publisher and bookseller, but shortly joined Alfred Novello as a music publisher. He married his partner's sister, Mary Victoria Novello (well known as Mary Cowden Clarke of the Shakespeare Concordance). He wrote theatrical articles and art-criticisms for the 'Atlas' and 'Examiner' newspapers, published 'Readings in Natural Philosophy' (1828), 'Tales from Chaucer' (1833), 'Adam the Gardener,' a book for boys (1834), 'The Riches of Chaucer' (1835), and about this time became a public lecturer on Shakespeare and other poets. He was an excellent lecturer in all respects, and did much in this way up to 1856 in popularizing the rational study of Shakespeare, —also publishing many of his lectures. In 1859 a volume of his own verses was issued, under the title of 'Carmina Minima.' It was he who saw to the texts of the notable popular series of British Poets known as Gilfillan's Poets. In conjunction with his wife he published 'Recollections of Writers' (1878) and 'The Shakespeare Key' (1879). They went to live at Nice, together with Alfred and Sabilla Novello, in 1856; and from 1861 till his death they lived at Villa Novello, Genoa. There he died on the 13th of March 1877, beloved, respected, leaving a pleasant memory and a great mass of work over and above that already specified, —useful work, if not greatly distinguished,—and above all the record of a happy and beneficent life.

LEIGH HUNT.

Of James Henry Leigh Hunt it is not necessary to say much here. He figures so prominently throughout these volumes, and has left such full records of himself, so generally known, that it should suffice to mark his eleven years' seniority to Keats by noting that he was born on the 19th of October 1794. and to refer the reader to the works numbered 23, 24, and 29 in the List of Principal Works Consulted (Volume I of this edition). It may be added that he lived long, produced enormously, and was ever faithful to his affection for Keats. The date of his death was the 28th of August 1859.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

Of Shelley also it scarcely seems needful to set down here much more than the dates of his birth and death and to refer those who want brief biographical details to the Memoir prefixed to the Aldine edition of his Poetical Works (George Bell & Sons, 1892), those who want full particulars to Professor Dowden's Life in two large volumes (Kegan Paul), and those who desire complete bibliographical data to 'The Shelley Library' (Reeves and Turner, 1886). For present purposes

it should suffice to point out that, born on the 4th of August 1792, he was more than three years Keats's senior, that when Keats and he became acquainted he had separated from Harriet and taken Mary as his life's partner, and that he survived Keats by less than a year and a half, having been drowned on the 8th of July 1822. Of his immortal 'Adonais, an Elegy on the Death of John Keats,' coupled with the fact that his ashes were buried not far from the grave of Keats at Rome, the barest record is enough.

JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS.

John Hamilton Reynolds, on the whole the most congenial of Keats's correspondents outside his family, is said to have been born at Shrewsbury on the 9th of September 1796. His father became head writing-master at Christ's Hospital; but it was at St. Paul's School that John received his education, being admitted on the 4th of March 1806. He was then described in the register as "aged 11." This would imply that he was not born later than the 4th of March 1795; but, in view of the date of his sister Jane's birth (the 6th of November 1794), the chronology of the family is somewhat tangled. Unless the school register is right, Reynolds was nearly a year younger than Keats; and yet, at the time of their first acquaintance (at Hunt's cottage in the Vale of Health), he had, since leaving school, been some time in business as a clerk in the Amicable Insurance Company's employ, and was, so to speak, a seasoned author. He had published in 1814 'Safie, an Eastern Tale,' dedicated to (and imitative of) Lord Byron, and 'The Eden of Imagination,' which owed more to the diverse influences of Wordsworth and Leigh Hunt; and in 1815 he had put forth a strange pamphlet called 'An Ode.' These three works were issued by John Martin of Holles Street; but his next work was published by Taylor and Hessey. This was 'The Naiad: a Tale' (with other poems, 1816), dedicated to Haydon "by one who admires his genius and values his friendship." It was Reynolds who made Keats known to Rice, Dilke, and Brown. In the course of Keats's Letters will be found the story of Reynolds's pamphlet 'Peter Bell, a Lyrical Ballad' (1819), issued anonymously, of course, as the jocular intention was to personate Wordsworth. His farce, 'One, Two, Three, Four, Five; by Advertisement,' was also produced in 1819: printed copies of it, undated, are "from the acting copy" and form No. 236 of 'Cumberland's British Theatre.' In 1820 Taylor and Hessey published a highly amusing and brilliant work from his pen entitled 'The Fancy: A Selection from the Poetical Remains of the late Peter Corcoran...with a brief Memoir of his Life.' Reynolds was, however, "called off" from his allegiance to the Muse by an opportunity of entering the office of Mr. Fladgate and becoming a Solicitor—an offer which promised advantage, but was incompatible with *avowed* literary pursuits. His sonnet bidding Farewell to the Muses (page 130, *post*) is delightful. After that farewell he published his most important volume 'The Garden of Florence; and other Poems' (1821), in which he gave his name as "John Hamilton" only; and, apart from this, he never wholly desisted from literature for very long. He wrote much for magazines and news-

papers; and his sister Charlotte told me that he provided Charles Mathews with words for his popular entertainments. She did not specify which; and it must be borne in mind that three, at all events, 'The Country Cousins,' 'The Trip to France,' and 'The Trip to America,' are currently attributed to James Smith, whom Mathews is said to have described as "the only man" capable of writing "clever nonsense." Reynolds participated with Thomas Hood in writing the notable little anonymous book 'Odes and Addresses to Great People,' which went through three editions, two in 1825 and one in 1826. More than once have the 'Odes and Addresses' been apportioned between Hood and Reynolds on more or less trustworthy authority. Having in my library a copy of the third edition with the authorship of each poem marked in the writing of Hood, I think it well to state here that those ascribed to Reynolds by his coadjutor and brother-in-law are the

Ode to Mr. M'Adam,

Address to Mr. Dymoke,

Address to Sylvanus Urban, Esquire,

Address to R. W. Elliston, Esquire, and

Address to...the Dean and Chapter of Westminster;

while the Address to Maria Darlington is stated by Hood to be "a Joint Production of Thomas Hood and John Hamilton Reynolds." Miss Charlotte Reynolds confirmed these ascriptions save in one particular: she thought her brother was alone responsible for the Address to Maria Darlington. She also told me—and that positively—that the poem "Sally Brown" was written by Hood and Reynolds, alternate stanzas being from the pen of each poet. Reynolds had married in or about 1821, and had stuck more or less to business for a while. The witty and loveable James Rice, of whom we know so little and desire to know so much, paid his expenses of admission as a solicitor, took him into partnership, and relinquished a good practice for him to follow alone; but Reynolds gave it up prematurely. Perhaps "the Muses" tempted him; but, be that as it may, he did not rise to greatness in literature; and his second farce, 'Confounded Foreigners' (first acted in January 1838 and "printed from the prompter's copy" as No. 32 of "Webster's Acting National Drama"), is not as amusing as it should be. From about 1838 to the end of his life Reynolds resided in the Isle of Wight, where he obtained the post of Clerk to the County Court. His death took place at Node Hill, Newport, on the 15th of November 1852.

MARIANE REYNOLDS.

Mariane and Jane Reynolds, with whom Keats was, as shown by the letters, on very friendly and pleasant terms, were both older than he was. Charlotte, the only one of the family whom I knew, was much younger. Mariane was born on the 23rd of February 1793. She married a Mr. Green, and was the mother of the two distinguished artists Charles and Townley Green, both lately deceased. Mrs. Green herself had a troublous life, bravely lived. She died on the 7th of January 1874, leaving an unmarried daughter (Marian) as well as the brother painters.

JANE REYNOLDS.

Jane Reynolds was born on the 6th of November 1794. Her sister and she were, it will be seen, aged 24½ and nearly 23 when Keats wrote them the first of the extant letters. On the 5th of May 1824 Jane Reynolds was married to Thomas Hood. The marriage was opposed by her family as imprudent; but all who read the 'Memorials of Thomas Hood' published in 1860 will be convinced that the union was a happy one, however hapless the struggles and premature death of the poet. Misfortune but drew the couple closer together. It was the first fruit of this union that called forth Lamb's poem 'On an Infant dying as soon as born.' Later (in 1830), at Winchmore Hall, Middlesex, Mrs. Hood gave birth to a daughter, Frances Freeling—afterwards known in the world of letters by her married name of Frances Freeling Broderip. On the 19th of January 1835, at Lake House, Wanstead, Thomas Hood Junior was born. From 1835 to 1838, the Hoods were abroad. On the 3rd of May 1845 Hood died at Devonshire Lodge, Finchley Road; and within eighteen months Jane Hood also died. Her son and daughter have both been dead for some years. The portraits of Thomas and Jane Hood, bought from their son's widow, are in the National Portrait Gallery.

CHARLOTTE REYNOLDS THE ELDER.

Of Charlotte Reynolds the elder—Mrs. Reynolds, the mother of Mariane, Jane, John, and Charlotte the younger—I know little beyond the fact that she also was among Keats's correspondents, that her maiden-name was Cox, that she was born on the 15th of November 1761, and that she died on the 13th of May 1848. To her youngest daughter Charlotte, who was born on the 12th of May 1802 and died on the 26th of October 1884 in the house of the Green brothers at Hampstead, I was indebted for much information. She loved to relate how her brother-in-law Hood had made her the heroine of his comic poem 'Number One: Versified from the Prose of a Young Lady,' and had drawn a caricature of her at the head of it. She still had her "single lot on hand" to the last, and never seemed to regret the circumstance.

BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON.

Benjamin Robert Haydon, who like Keats's father came from the West Country, was, at the time of his acquaintance with the poet, a portent of energy, enthusiasm, ambition, and egotism. Although as a painter he showed sparks of the sacred fire and possessed in fact something akin to genius, his life-work suffered from defects of judgment, a faulty sense of proportion, and a total want of humour. Haydon was the son of a stationer at Plymouth, where he was born on the 26th of January 1786. At the time when Keats became excited at the bare thought of coming face to face with "this glorious Haydon and all his creation," the painter was, it will be seen, nearly 31 years old—the poet just 21. Haydon's story is too well known to need telling in detail here. He had come to London and become a student at the Royal Academy as early as 1804; and in 1807 he showed his first

picture. This was 'The Repose of the Holy Family in Egypt,' hung at the Royal Academy. The next picture exhibited was 'Dentatus.' The hanging of these two works led to a quarrel between Haydon and the authorities; indeed this remarkable man's arrogance and impetuosity led him to quarrel alike with patrons, friends, and critics; and, even when forced to take to portrait painting, he scorned to temporize or humour his subjects. Among the most notable of his huge canvases were 'The Judgment of Solomon,' 'The Entry of Christ into Jerusalem,' 'The Raising of Lazarus' (which has a home in our National Gallery), 'The Crucifixion,' and 'Xenophon and the ten Thousand seeing the Sea.' 'Napoleon at St. Helena' and 'The Reform Banquet' should also be mentioned, and that 'Mock Election' which he painted when in prison for debt the second time, and which was bought by George IV. Haydon failed to realize the lessons of life: when he broke out in 1827 with "my 'Judgment of Solomon' is now in a warehouse in the Borough; my 'Entry into Jerusalem' is doubled up in a back room in Holborn; my 'Lazarus' is in an upholsterer's shop in Mount Street, and my 'Crucifixion' in a hay-loft in Lisson Grove,"—he had missed the point of it all. He was not wanted for the purpose to which he insisted on devoting his egregious vitality. But he was a powerful and untiring propagandist, a good writer, a splendid lecturer; and he succeeded in making the Nation buy the Elgin Marbles.

The long row of folio volumes forming his illustrated manuscript journal is a monumental reflexion of his strange personality. The works based upon the journal by Tom Taylor and Frederick Wordsworth Haydon (No. 27 and No. 39 in the List of Works Consulted, Volume I of this edition, pages xix and xx) teem with a fascinating psychological interest, though they are not good books. His scattered essays are generally excellent reading, and full of instruction; and in one book he comes down to posterity associated with no less a luminary than William Hazlitt. That book is the agreeable volume in which, in 1838, Messrs. Adam and Charles Black republished from the seventh edition of the 'Encyclopædia Britannica' Hazlitt's Essay on the Fine Arts and Haydon's on Painting.

In 1836 he was finishing a picture of quite moderate size for him, representing the Black Prince thanking Lord Audley at the close of the battle of Poitiers; and he wrote to J. R. Planché ('Recollections and Reflections,' 1872, Volume I, pages 229-30) for certain information on matters of costume—so careful was he in such particulars. The picture had been commissioned by a descendant of Audley, contained numerous portraits of Audleys then living, and was certainly a most striking production—none the worse, I suspect, for the comparative modesty of its size. Nevertheless, it must have measured at least 18 feet by 12, and it was probably found inconvenient to the house of Audley. At all events the whirligig of time brought it to Haydon's own county about the year 1858. That is how I come to speak of it as a thing seen. My father's friend Mr. John Whiteway of Fishwick, on the Teign, who had a collection of fine old pictures, bought this one of Haydon's in London, and brought it home (a year or two before I left the county) for a birthday present to his wife. She kept it till the end of her long life; but I shall never forget her graphic account of its arrival at Fishwick and of the

removal of a large window in the drawing room in order to get the picture into the house. This scrap of gossip is, I venture to think, an apt illustration of Haydon's failure in life. There was no place in little England for such canvases as his; and this was but a small one. Although he had in his time succeeded in drawing crowds to see his work, his crowning misfortune was a failure in that kind: he attempted to show his 'Banishment of Aristides,' and his 'Nero Playing while Rome was in Flames.' In the same building, "General Tom Thumb" was exhibiting his ludicrous small person; and, although a week's visitors to Haydon's show numbered but 133, the dwarf received the attentions and the gate-money of 120,000 persons in the same period. At length Haydon's colossal fighting prowess collapsed: on the 22nd of June 1846 he ended his eventful career by shooting himself.

WILLIAM HASLAM.

William Haslam's personality remains in what I must call a semi-nebulous state. Keats knew him through the Wylies and knew Severn through him. Hence he counts for something. He appears both well and ill in the letters. I would gladly have brought his individuality up to some sort of sketchy reality, had the opportunity been afforded me. He had a City office in 1848 and looked up some entries in registers for Lord Houghton. There was a daughter of his living some twenty years ago, when I had newly taken up the task of editing Keats's works; and I applied to her as in duty bound. The answer vouchsafed me left the impression that there was something to hide; and there the quest had to be dropped. Perhaps I wrong Haslam; but I never rose to the height of liking him in the face of the incident of the torn-up letter from George Keats. Perhaps one would with fuller knowledge.

JOSEPH SEVERN.

Joseph Severn was the son of a musician, James Severn, and was born on the 7th of December 1793 at Hoxton. He showed a taste for drawing at an early age; and his father, *faute de mieux*, apprenticed him to an engraver. To engraving he did not take kindly; and he somehow managed to get an easel, colours, and brushes and to attend occasionally at the schools of the Royal Academy. In 1816 his enthusiasm was battling with his want of means; but his acquaintance with Keats fired him with redoubled ambition; and when in 1817 the Academy announced a students' competition for a gold medal, to be awarded for the best historical painting on a subject from Spenser, Severn sold his watch and books to buy the necessary material, competed, and won. His picture was 'The Cave of Despair.' His next, 'Hermia and Helena,' was accepted and exhibited by the Academy, but not much noticed. His growing friendship from about 1818 with Hunt, Reynolds, Keats, and Charles Brown, helped to form his tastes; and when, in 1820, he decided to go with the dying Keats to Rome, he was probably wiser than his father thought. That impulsive gentleman is said to have knocked him down, on account of the supposed injury to his prospects. After Keats's death Severn set to work to finish the picture of 'The Death of Alcibiades' which he had

left undone for Keats's sake. He obtained through this picture a three years' travelling premium of £130; and the Academy refunded the expenses of his visit to Rome. Severn did not progress steadily as an artist after these early successes; but his many portraits of Keats are highly treasured, especially the earlier ones; with rare exceptions, the posthumous ones are of little interest or merit; his work, however, found a certain acceptance for the sake of the poet at whose deathbed he had attended so devotedly. He lived a great part of his life at Rome. In 1828 he married Elizabeth, daughter of Archibald, Lord Montgomerie; and he had by her several children, three of whom grew up to distinguish themselves as artists. One of his commissions was a picture of the Coliseum with Shelley in a prominent position, painted for Sir Percy Florence Shelley; and he projected, but did not execute, an illustrated edition of 'Adonais'—a poem in which he was anxious to appropriate to himself the portrait of Leigh Hunt, though Shelley had apologized in the preface for Severn's absence from the poem. In 1841 he returned to England for the sake of his children's education, and remained some 19 years. In 1860 he obtained the British Consulship at Rome. This he held till 1872, when he was superannuated. He died at Rome on the 3rd of August 1879, and was buried beside Keats. Those who desire to know more of his life, friendships, and correspondence should consult the work of Mr. William Sharp numbered 64 in the List of Principal Works Consulted (Volume I of this edition, page xxii),—in which, however, a mysterious insinuation is to be guarded against. At page 273 it is suggested that Severn blew hot and cold about the publication of the Letters to Fanny Brawne. The volume was dedicated to him; and he not only accepted the dedication (effusively, I may say), but failed throughout our correspondence to show any change of views. Mr. Sharp, however, excuses himself from publishing a letter to the late James Fields of Boston (Mass.) denouncing the publication of the letters as either "an outrage on the poet's memory" (Mr. Field's words) or "so regrettable a disloyalty" (Mr. Sharp's). Had I been consulted on the question whether, thus much being printed, Severn's own letter should also see the light, I should certainly have said "Print it by all means: don't mind me." Dear old Severn! He is said by Mr. Sharp to have been "a man of moods" (page 272). Well! Perhaps he was. He was in a charming mood when I saw him at Rome in 1871,—and on the numerous occasions on which he wrote to me.

BENJAMIN BAILEY.

Of Benjamin Bailey, who, judged by the standard of sympathy and receptiveness, must be regarded as one of Keats's most important correspondents, very little is publicly known save through the biographies of the poet. From Mr. Joseph Foster's 'Alumni Oxonienses' it appears that he was the son of Mr. John Bailey of Thorney in Cambridgeshire; and, as he is recorded to have matriculated from Magdalen Hall on the 19th of October 1816 at the age of 25, it would seem that he was born about four years before Keats. He was an Oxford undergraduate, reading for the Church, when Keats made his acquaintance; and at that time he was a distinctly "bookish" young man. Milton and Wordsworth

were his supreme favourites; but it seems to have escaped the narrators that he actually produced a small printed work illustrative of his love for Wordsworth.

It will be remembered that Keats stayed with Bailey at Oxford for some weeks of the long vacation of 1817, and there wrote the Third Book of 'Endymion,' finding plenty of time to enjoy with his friend constant excursions on foot and by boat up and down the Isis, revelling in the beauties of nature, and indulging in high talk on great subjects. Before Bailey was ordained and married, he visited Stratford-on-Avon with Keats. He obtained a curacy in the neighbourhood of Carlisle at the end of 1817. In 1818 he defended Keats in 'The Oxford Herald' (for the 6th of June). In 1819 he was married to a daughter of the Bishop of Stirling,—a sister of Robert Gleig, the author (later on) of 'The Subaltern' &c., and Chaplain-General of the Forces. In 1819 Bailey became Vicar of Dallington in Northamptonshire. In 1827 he must have been at Townfield in Scotland, as two extant sonnets by him bear the name of that place with the date July 1827. In 1835 and 1836 he was at Colombo in Ceylon, of which place he was Arch-deacon; and in 1847 he took the degree of Doctor of Divinity. He was still at Colombo in 1848 and up to May 1849: how much later I know not. From a manuscript note in Mr. Foster's own copy of the 'Alumni' it appears that Bailey died in London on the 25th of June 1853: the date has, however, been stated elsewhere as 1852.

In the year 1876 I purchased among some pamphlets which appeared to be 'Athenæum' clearings, and then mislaid, an anonymous tract—a single post 8vo sheet in a plain grey wrapper—with a manuscript inscription connecting it with Bailey. Its title is 'Lines | Addressed to | William Wordsworth Esq.' The title-page bears an epigraph from the seventh Satire of Juvenal and the imprint "Ceylon, | Colombo—: Printed at the Wesleyan Mission Press. | 1835." On the fly-leaf is written, in that hand which "looks illegible and may perchance be read," the following inscription to Keats's other friend and correspondent whose writing "looks very legible and may perchance not be read":—"C. Dilke Esq. with the kind regards of B. Bailey. Colombo. Jany. 1836. The first of these poems is by the Honble. Mr. Serjt. Rough, Senior Puisne Justice of Ceylon—the rest by me.—They may, if wished, be reprinted in the *Athenæum*, if not done so already. B. B." The columns of that paper for 1835 and 1836 show no trace of the reprint thus authorized; and we are not surprised. Mr. Serjeant Rough's effusion consists of seven long stanzas of a very poor kind. Bailey's remainder is less ambitious, and much better; and the place which the worthy ecclesiastic now takes in the records of Keats's life confers on this memorial of his enthusiasm a literary interest. His part of the pamphlet is but six pages, containing four sonnets and two smaller pieces of eight lines each. I rediscovered my discovery in 1886 and communicated it to the Editor of the *Athenæum*, who, availing himself of the permission given half a century earlier, reprinted one of the sonnets. The tiny tract closes with the following lines written in 1827 'On a Portrait of Wordsworth':

Though sadness seem to dwell upon his face,
It is of Thought the "melancholy grace":

Deep Thought is seated on that ample brow,
 And sheds a grandeur on the face below ;
 A countenance serene, where feelings mild
 With high imagination mingle : Child,
 And Youth, and Manhood—every age we trace
 Depicted in his WORKS, and in his FACE.

Keats had an excessively high opinion of Bailey's character at first; and I think he must have retained it in the main, although his criticism of his friend's inconstancy in love affairs, written to his brother and sister-in-law in March 1819 is full and unsparing. He wrote to Bailey in August 1819 somewhat coldly to judge from the portion of the letter which is extant (see letter CXXV) : still, he congratulated him on his marriage, and said things which he could not have said sincerely if he had not resolved to condone what he regarded as an offence to woman-kind in Bailey's behaviour. As Keats was incapable of hypocrisy, I think we must take his final judgment of Bailey to be that he was "one of the noblest men alive" (page 57, *post*), but inconstant to a fault in his relations with women in the days of his bachelorhood,—a defect which Keats might well, writing certain phrases which he did to George and Georgiana, regard as cured by his marriage.

JAMES RICE.

The personality of James Rice is vividly alive in these volumes; and yet there is scarcely anything to say about his annals, beyond the bare record that he was not alive at the end of 1833. Witty and generous in the extreme, he appears to have been a general favourite, and one who impressed others as in some sense fortunate, despite his miserable health,—concerning which, Keats going to enquire on one occasion, reported to his brothers that "lo! Master Jemmy had been to the play the night before, and was out at the time—he always comes on his legs like a Cat." Rice was educated for the law; and the reader will see from the note on Reynolds at page 130 (*post*) how liberal a soul that of James Rice was. But there must have been something very notable about the man of whom two such opposites as Keats and Dilke, both so unusually capable of judging character, agreed in employing terms of enthusiastic laudation. It was not for nothing that Keats imported into his criticism of Bailey's love affairs the fact that James Rice, the witty, the gay, the glib-tongued, had for his own satisfaction sat in judgment: "Rice would not make an immature resolve: he was ardent in his friendship for Bailey, he examined the whole for and against minutely; and he has abandoned Bailey entirely." It was not for nothing that Keats was at the time more swayed against Bailey by this than anything else; not for nothing that he told his brother in September 1819 that Rice was "the most sensible and even wise man" he knew,—with "a few John Bull prejudices, but they improve him"; and assuredly it was not for nothing that Dilke, the shrewd, the keen, the far-seeing, spoke of him as "dear generous noble James Rice—the best, and in his quaint way one of the wittiest and wisest men I ever knew." Reynolds, whose affection and esteem had borne the hard test of considerable obligation, wrote to Lord

Houghton when the 'Life, Letters' &c. was in preparation that Rice had been "a *very* kind friend to him," adding—"He was a quiet true wit—extremely well read—had great taste and sound judgment. For every quality that marks the sensible companion—the valuable Friend—the gentleman, and the Man—I have known no one to surpass him." How gladly would we see a few of his letters, and realise his outer man by means of a fine portrait!

CHARLES WENTWORTH DILKE.

Charles Wentworth Dilke, born on the 8th of December 1789, made his start in life as a clerk in the Navy Pay Office, and employed his leisure in the study of English literature, especially of the elder dramatists. By the time Keats had come to years of discretion, Dilke had already brought out in the years 1814 to 1816 an admirably edited series of volumes supplementary to Dodsley's Collection of Old Plays, and had married and settled at Hampstead. When Keats made his acquaintance he was living at Wentworth Place with his wife and his son Charles, born in 1810, and afterwards created a Baronet. He was a contributor to 'The London Magazine,' 'The London Review,' 'The Champion,' 'The Retrospective Review,' and in 1821 advocated the repeal of the corn laws in a letter addressed to Lord John Russell, published as a pamphlet. 'The Athenæum,' established by Silk Buckingham in 1828, was in failing health at the end of 1829. Dilke came to its rescue, taking complete editorial control in 1830, and greatly influencing the management on behalf of the proprietors, who, besides himself and the printer, seem to have been John Hamilton Reynolds, Thomas Hood, and Allan Cunningham. These, alarmed by his bold measures, such as reduction of price, withdrew from the venture, save as contributors, and left Dilke and the printer alone, to establish, successfully, an independent and incorruptible literary organ. In 1836, on the abolition of the Navy Pay Office, Dilke, as a civil service pensioner, was able to devote himself more completely to 'The Athenæum'; and when, between 1840 and 1850, it had become an assured success, he relinquished the editorship. In 1846 he became manager of 'The Daily News'; but he withdrew from that post at the close of an agreed three years, the composite proprietorship proving intractable. The principles which he would have applied to it were adopted with good results later on. From 1847 or thereabout he did most of his best literary work—his exact, thorough, truth-finding, and truth-speaking papers on Junius, Burke, Wilkes, Dr. Wolcot ('Peter Pindar'), Pope, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, and many like subjects. Dilke was one of those who in 1858 attempted to bring about a reform in the administration of the Royal Literary Fund, and, being outvoted, founded the Guild of Literature and Art. He left London in 1862 and went to live at Alice Holt in Hampshire. There, on the 10th of August 1864, his useful and distinguished life closed after an illness of only a few days. The facts of his life may be read more at length in the Biographical Sketch prefixed by his grandson, the Right Honourable Sir Charles Wentworth Dilke, Baronet, M.P., to the two volumes of articles reprinted under the title of 'Papers of a Critic' (Murray, 1875).

CHARLES ARMITAGE BROWN.

Charles Armitage Brown was born in Lambeth in 1786. His father was a Scotch stock-broker. When only eighteen years old the lad was sent to St. Petersburg to manage a business. By 1810 or thereabout Charles had come back to London, penniless, and had to make a living as he might; but, through the early death of a brother he became possessed of just enough to live on, and added to his income by writing for periodicals &c. In 1814, a serio-comic opera by him, entitled 'Narensky, or the Road to Yaroslaf' was both published and performed at Drury Lane. The music was by Braham and Reeve: it ran for several nights, but is an indifferent production enough. His relations with Keats from 1817 to the time of the poet's death come out clearly and pleasantly in the letters, but there is a point recorded in the Houghton papers indicative of remarkable tact. After telling how anxious he was for Keats's friendship the moment he met him, Brown says—"I succeeded in making him come often to my house by never asking him to come oftener; and I let him feel himself at perfect liberty there chiefly by avoiding to assure him of the fact. He quickly became intimate." After Keats's death Brown went to Italy, met Byron, whom he tried to convert from his erroneous views on Keats, became more or less friendly with Landor, and contributed to 'The Liberal' under the pseudonyms of "Carlucci" and "Carlone." He was the author of papers in that short-lived periodical which have been attributed to two wrong Charleses—to Lamb ('Les Charmettes and Rousseau') and to Cowden Clarke ('On Shakespeare's Fools'). He contributed to many of Leigh Hunt's ventures. Returning to England in the spring of 1837, he lived at Laira Green near Plymouth, edited 'The Plymouth Journal,' and lectured on Shakespeare and Keats. In 1838 he published a work of some permanent value and considerable talent, which he dedicated to Landor: it is called "Shakespeare's Autobiographical Poems. Being his Sonnets clearly developed: with his Character drawn chiefly from his works." The publisher was James Bohn of London. It is a crown 8vo volume of over 300 pages. He meant to have edited Keats's Works with a memoir (which he wrote); but on deciding to emigrate to New Zealand he transferred his materials to Mr. Monckton Milnes, afterwards Lord Houghton. In 1841 Brown obtained a government grant of land at New Plymouth, now called Taranaki, and took up his residence there. He was dissatisfied with the land, and would have come back; but he died suddenly of apoplexy in June 1842, and was buried at Taranaki.

Charles Brown was an excellent fellow and a good friend to Keats: he was also a wit and a jolly companion, whom Keats loved. He was liable to prejudices of an unusually strong kind; and was wanting in breadth of character. The time will come when the battle between Charles Brown and George Keats will be fought over again around the growing Cairn of Keats literature. For that reason I take this opportunity of putting on public record a note of the shrewd and critical-minded Dilke, who lived in the same block with him and knew him and the Keats circle intimately. It is written in Dilke's copy of the 'Life, Letters' &c. (1848) as a *caveat* against any over-estimate of Brown's liberality and chivalry such as might

possibly be formed after reading the work of Lord Houghton, who had described Brown as a "retired Russia-merchant" and the "generous protector and devoted friend of the Poet Keats." This is Dilke's note:—

"A retired Russia-merchant the generous protector of the poet Keats! Fine words—what are they worth? I arrived from Broadstairs just in time to see the first notice of this work before it was inserted in the *Athenæum*, and therein these fine words and others of a like tendency were echoed with a vengeance—and the retired Russia-merchant figured as the generous patron! There is a curious amount of truth and error in these fine phrases—Brown *was* a retired Russia-merchant. His brother John had been clerk in a merchant house, started on his own account, went to Petersburg, sent for his brother Charles (then about 18 I should say), left him to conduct the business there and returned to manage it in England. They speculated in bristles and having little or no capital soon failed! Charles returned to England at about three and twenty—and for many years had a *very hard struggle*, the particulars of which do not concern Keats' history. Then his brother James returned from India and died within six weeks or two months. It was his small share of James' property on which he afterwards lived—for his reversion to two houses or one left him by his father had been sold at his bankruptcy. What Mr. Milnes means by a 'generous protector' I know not—assuredly it had nothing to do with money. When John Keats died Brown sent in an account to George for Board, Money lent, and *interest* amounting to about £72—which by George's order I paid. Neither Mr. Milnes nor his distinguished ...friend of Fiesole,¹ knew anything about Brown—they were not sufficiently on an equality to penetrate the heart of his mystery. If it were to the purpose, I could here write down a character of Brown, that would be greatly to his honour—though there would be nothing in it about the retired Russia-merchant or generous protector. I saw him under all varieties of fortune, they only under one, of moderate, very moderate, independence. He was the most scrupulously honest man I ever knew—but wanted nobleness to lift this honesty out of the commercial kennel. He would have forgiven John what he owed him with all his heart—but had John been able and offered to pay, he would have charged interest, as he did to George. He could do generous things too—but not after the fashion of the world and therefore they were not appreciated by the world. His sense of justice led him at times to do acts of generosity—at others of meanness—the latter was always noticed the former overlooked—therefore amongst his early companions he had a character for anything rather than liberality—but he was liberal." Believing every word of this note, I still find it compatible with a very high estimate of Brown's affection for Keats. In a touching letter sent to Severn when nursing the dying poet, his obviously genuine expressions of gratitude leave the impression that he would himself have done anything for Keats, that might have lain in his power.

¹ Lander.

TAYLOR AND HESSEY.

Of Keats's publishers, Taylor and Hessey, one takes in these volumes, as indeed in history, a far more prominent position than the other. John Taylor was born at East Redford (Notts.) on the 31st of July 1781, and had been several years established in the publishing partnership at No. 93 Fleet Street when he became acquainted with Keats. He was a man of character and learning,—the originator of the theory that Sir Philip Francis wrote the Letters of Junius, a subject on which he published 'A Discovery of the Author of the Letters of Junius' (1813), 'The Identity of Junius with a distinguished Living Character Established' (1816), and 'A Supplement to Junius Identified' (1817). These works, it will be noted, or at least two of them, preceded the time of his connexion with Keats as publisher of 'Endymion'; and it seems likely that Keats had been reading them when he wrote the postscript to letter No. XXXIV—"I hope your next work will be of a more general interest. I suppose you cogitate a little about it now and then." About that very time a second edition, corrected and enlarged, of 'The Identity' was being issued; and it may be to that that Keats alludes at page 78 when he says to his brothers that he thinks Taylor "will be out before" 'Endymion.'

It has been alleged that Edward Dubois was the author of these treatises; but Taylor himself emphatically declared that he had no assistance either from Dubois or from any one else. In 1821, on the acquisition of 'The London Magazine' by his firm, Taylor assumed the Editorship, with Thomas Hood as sub-editor. Moving to Waterloo Place, the firm extended frequent and congenial hospitality to their distinguished contributors,—such as Lamb, Coleridge, and Talfourd. Taylor, like his brother James, the Bakewell banker, was a close student of the currency question. Opposed to Sir Robert Peel's measures in this matter, he published a number of works on this somewhat dry department of human learning. His later writings include 'The Emphatic New Testament, with an Introductory Essay on Greek Emphasis' (1852), 'The Great Pyramid: Why was it Built?' (1859), 'The Battle of the Standards' (1864), and 'Light shed on Scripture Truth by a more Uniform Translation' (1864). Taylor, who never married, died on the 5th of July 1864. He is buried at Gamston, near Retford.

Of James Augustus Hessey, I am able to record but little beyond what appears above or in the letters of Keats or the notes upon them. Lord Houghton applied to Reynolds for information about him, and got next to nothing beyond the fact of the partnership, and that Hessey "attended to the retail business in Fleet Street" and was "a very respectable person—but of no moment in the memoir" of Keats. I ascertained from his son that he was born on the 28th of July 1785 and died on the 7th of April 1870. He must have quitted the business comparatively early, as the firm was already in 1841 known by the style of Taylor and Walton (of Upper Gower Street). He was the father of Archdeacon Hessey. Of his personality one gathers nothing but pleasant impressions from the letters of Keats, slight as the indications are. The firm was collectively and individually on terms of friendship and kindness with the poet. The letters are generally to the predominant partner Taylor: of Hessey's personality the most significant thing is

Keats's mention of him on one occasion as 'Mistessey'—a jocular way of alluding to some one's corruption of "Mr. Hessey" into "Mista 'Essey." Had he been other than a good fellow Keats would not have ventured on 'Mistessey.'

RICHARD WOODHOUSE.

To Richard Woodhouse the lovers of Keats owe no common debt. Born in 1783 or 1789, he was, when Keats became acquainted with him, "a young barrister who," to use Professor Colvin's words ('Keats,' page 126), "acted in some sort as adviser or literary assistant to Messrs. Taylor and Hessey." His interleaved and unnotated copy of 'Endymion' and his Common-place books full of copies made from Keats's poems before publication and copies of letters from Keats made with a view to biographical use, have proved invaluable, both for the quality and the quantity of what he preserved and for his own gifts as an accurate and judicious recorder. From a letter written by Keats to Dilke it appears that Charles Brown took "one of his funny odd dislikes" to the literary young lawyer. Woodhouse died on the 3rd of September 1834. In the dearth of details I am fain to set down what he was not only an excellent scholar in the literary sense, but a practical stenographer. There are many notes in the interleaved 'Endymion' written in shorthand—Mavor's system (1795).

JAMES ELMES.

James Elmes, senior even to his friend Haydon, was considerably older than Keats. Born in London on the 15th of October 1782, he had entered the Merchant Taylors' School in April 1796, but a few months after Keats's birth. Destined for the career of an architect, Elmes had studied under George Gibson and at the Royal Academy, had gained the silver medal for an architectural design as early as 1805, had been a constant exhibitor of designs for some years, had become Vice-President of the Royal Architectural Society in 1809; and when Haydon was firing Keats's young enthusiasm with fervour for the fine arts, Elmes, his close associate, was editing that notable periodical the 'Annals' (No. 1 to No. 5, List of Principal Works Consulted, Volume I, page xvii). Elmes was a distinctly successful man: not only did he, as recorded in Redgrave's Dictionary of Artists of the English School (1874), design and erect several buildings in the Metropolis, but he was Surveyor of the Port of London up till 1848, was a voluminous and instructive writer on art subjects, and shares with Haydon the credit of the Elgin Marbles propaganda. He published in 1817 'Hints on the Improvement of Prisons,' in 1823 'Lectures on Architecture' and 'Memoirs of the Life and Works of Sir Christopher Wren,' in 1825 'The Arts and Artists,' in 1826 'An Essay on the Law of Dilapidations' and 'A General and Bibliographical Dictionary of the Fine Arts,'—an important work issued in fasciculi. He was also the author of a work entitled 'London in the Nineteenth Century'; and in 1831 he contributed to our knowledge of the metropolis 'A Topographical Dictionary of London and its Environs,' of which I find no mention by Redgrave

or in other works of reference. It is invaluable for the study of "vanishing London." 'Elmes's Quarterly Review,' a monograph on Thomas Clarkson, a work on 'Hebrew Poetry of the Middle Ages,' and the paternity and early instruction of the distinguished architect Harvey Lonsdale Elmes, are to be reckoned among his achievements. His distinguished son, born in 1813, died of consumption in Jamaica in 1847; in 1848 James Elmes's eyesight was failing; and he relinquished the Surveyorship of the Port of London. He seems to have outlived his better judgment as well as his son,—his last work, issued in 1856, being 'The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ rendered into one Narrative.' He died on the 2nd of April 1862, at Greenwich, and is buried at Charlton.

HORACE SMITH.

The instant and permanent success of one book and the well merited friendship of several men great in the world of letters have combined to keep Horace Smith's memory green,—greener indeed than the mass of his very voluminous writings apart from the 'Rejected Addresses' would have kept it. And so long as edition follows edition of that brilliant and delightful book, the world will not be at a loss for details of the life of the brother authors James Smith and Horatio, or, as he is always called, Horace Smith. They were the sons of Robert Smith, a Somersetshire man who came to London and became Solicitor to the Board of Ordnance. James was born on the 10th of February 1775, Horace not till 1779; and both were educated at Mr. Burford's School at Chigwell in Essex. Horace was trained in business in a merchant's office; but he leant early towards literature, and published in 1800 a novel called 'The Runaway.' This was followed in 1802 by one entitled 'Trevanion, or Matrimonial Ventures,' and in 1807 by 'Horatio, or Memoirs of the Davenport Family.' He took part in the production of Combe's Magazine 'The Pic Nic' and in furnishing prefaces for 'Bell's British Theatre' edited by Cumberland, and contributed to Hill's 'Monthly Mirror.' It was in 1812 that his brother and he found themselves famous by the publication of that wonderful book of parodies entitled 'Rejected Addresses, or the New Theatrum Poetarum'; and that book was followed, in 1813, by their 'Horace in London.' Notwithstanding his devotion to literature, Horace Smith went on the Stock Exchange and had realized a competency by 1820, when he retired from business. His relations with Shelley were such as to endear his memory to many of the poet's present lovers. Traces of these relations occur in an anonymous work which he published in 1821,—'Amarynthus, the Nympholept; a Pastoral Drama in three acts—with other Poems'; and it is perhaps in the words of Shelley that Smith will go furthest down the ages,—the words in which Maria Gisborne was reminded that Smith was among those whom she would see in London:—

Wit and sense,

Virtue and human knowledge, all that might
Make this dull world a business of delight,
Are all combined in Horace Smith.

From the same poetical letter we learn that Smith was one of the four men whom Shelley earnestly desired to have in his house in Italy—

Oh! that Hunt, Hogg, Peacock, and Smith were there,
With every thing belonging to them fair!—

And the character which the poet gave his friend in the 'Letter to Maria Gisborne' is much what other discerning witnesses have recorded in plain prose. Smith started to join Shelley in Italy, but on hearing that his friend was drowned, he halted at Versailles and stayed there three years. He settled afterwards at Brighton, where his surviving daughter, Miss Eliza Horace Smith, still (1901) resides. Of Smith's later writings, some dozen or so of tales and novels, from 'Brambletye House, or Cavaliers and Roundheads' (1826) down to 'Love and Mesmerism' (1845), are practically forgotten, though the first has been often reprinted. His 'Gaieties and Gravities' (1825), 'The Midsummer Medley for 1830, A Series of Comic Tales, Sketches, and Fugitive Vagaries in Prose and Verse' (2 volumes, 1830), 'Festivals, Games, and Amusements, Ancient and Modern' (1831), and 'The Tin Trumpet' (1836), are still sought by collectors of nineteenth century literature. Perhaps the most valued of his single compositions outside the 'Rejected Addresses' is the admirable 'Address to a Mummy,' in which true wit and true feeling are combined in a manner which Hood has lifted to the level of a high literary art. Smith died at Tunbridge Wells on the 12th of July 1849. It is known that he had passed a happy domestic life; but in the case of such a man one reads with pleasure his own testimony on that subject. In a letter in my possession, written on the 9th of February 1845, to congratulate his nephew Charles on his marriage, he says, and solemnly signs "Horatio Smith," "If you prove as happy in your choice as your father and myself have been,—which I see no reason whatever to doubt, you may indeed consider yourself a lucky fellow!"

THE JEFFREYS OF TEIGNMOUTH.

It has been suggested that Mrs. Jeffrey and her daughters were family friends of the Keatses, and instrumental in bringing, first George and Thomas, and then John, to Teignmouth. This seems to me improbable from the terms in which Keats writes to his sister of having written to Miss Jeffrey. Letters CX and CXI to Miss Jeffrey deal with the question of getting cheap lodgings near Teignmouth: in Letter CXII he tells his sister that he has "written lately to some acquaintances in Devonshire,"—not "to our friends the Jeffreys,"—concerning a cheap lodging. Hence I judge that, when George and Tom went to Teignmouth, Mrs. Jeffrey and her daughters let their warm Devonshire hearts go out to the dying boy and his youthful nurse scarce more than a lad, and when the poet came were equally kind to the elder brother, beloved by everyone who met him.

From the four letters numbered LVI, LVIII, CX and CXI, I should judge that Mrs. Jeffrey had four daughters, Marian, Sarah, Fanny, and a young one who wore her hair down when the Keatses were at Teignmouth; but I have no distinct

information about their names, apart from these letters, except about Sarah. I do not even know how many of them married, though it is on record that Sarah did not. She and a sister who did marry are still remembered at Teignmouth by an old inhabitant or two; but I am not able to give dates of birth or death. One sister, concerning whom there is a local tradition that Keats "was in love with her," was of a more or less romantic turn, ultimately married a Mr. Prowse, and lived at Torquay. Under her married name she published a book in 1830—'Poems by Mrs. L. S. Prowse.' It contains 183 pages, including a seven-page list of subscribers, and excluding the title, contents, &c. Tradition will have it that the following lyric ('Si deseris pereo,' pages 156 and 157 of the book) was addressed to Keats on his departure with his dying brother in 1818:—

If thou canst bear to say adieu,
To her who loves so warm, so true;
If thou canst think thou mayst depart,
Yet leave unbroken the young heart,
Which gave to thee its earliest vow
And lives but in thy presence now;
Then quit thy love, thy bride—but know
Si deseris, ah! pereo.

Yet dearest go; the pang will be
Soon o'er; I shall not live to see
Thy look of love, which is my heaven
My happiness—to others given;
'Tis best we part; I could not bear
Thy coldness—nor the sick despair
Of love decaying; go then, go,
Si deseris, ah! pereo.

I had a foolish hope—'tis gone:
I thought thou might'st have lov'd alone
The simple heart which clung to thee
With more than Woman's constancy:—
'Tis over—but I murmur not
Nor dare I wish a happier lot—
To thee, to life farewell—for oh
Si deseris, ah! pereo!—

Whether that song was for him or not, there is a clear reference to his untimely fate in a thoughtful poem standing first in the collection, and called 'Autumnal Musings.' After the sententious utterance—

Surely as the least wretched we must class,
Those from th' unequal strife who earliest pass—

we have the following stanzas:—

No more of such a theme—it is not well
For one who scarce hath struck the mighty lyre,

Unthinkingly the dreary cry to swell
 Of victims to Opinion's breath of fire;
 What, tho' it did destroy their high desire?
 Yet unappall'd be the Muse still my choice,
 E'en tho' the grave sends forth a warning voice.

Yes—from the grave a warning: *one* is there
 Who sought it as a refuge, when too late
 For health or peace, he found how falsely fair
 The hope that led him on to consecrate
 His heart unto the muse—and yet not *hate*,
 But scorn and laughter quenched his worthy pride,
 The minstrel's heart was stricken,—and he died.

Yet died he not in vain; if, ere they rush
 To wreak their thoughtless malice on their kind,
 His fate may bid men ponder ere they crush
 The first aspirings of the Poet's mind;
 Spare the weak blossom future fruit to find,
 And leave to Time the perfecter to bring
 A plenteous Autumn from a tardy Spring.

It is natural to think that Keats and his brothers had much intellectual converse with a girl who could think and write like this a little later on, and it seems likely enough that one of the brothers showed her the 'Floure and Lefe' sonnet in 'The Examiner,' from which she would go to the old poem itself. This would account for her use of the Chaucerian stanza, so little in vogue at that time. There are no more stanzas in which Keats is glanced at according to the Teignmouth legend:—

More still the evening grew—the wither'd leaf
 Without once circling, fell unto the ground;¹
 All living creatures sought in sleep relief
 From the unusual calmness brooding round;
 No longer did the wild bird's song resound;
 Darken'd the heavy night clouds o'er my head,
 'Twas a fit hour to commune with the dead.

The unforgotten!—I can people here
 This solitude with beings of the past;
 They whose departing made the world look drear,
 And the bright sunshine of our youth o'ercast
 With sorrow, which thro' lengthen'd years shall last:
 Lo! potent as of old the magian's wand,
 Fancy, has call'd up the pale shadowy band.

¹ Compare 'Hyperion' (Book I, line 10—Volume II, page 129)—
 But where the dead leaf fell, there did it rest.

After this, in one and the same page, we get a reminiscence of Keats's 'Lamia' (Book II, lines 229-38) :

Ye who tell

With your philosophy, the rule and cause

That shapes the rainbow—

and the passionate lines

Oh could I hear e'en tho' my heart were riven

Those well remembered accents *once* again—

It may not be—the wish, the thought are vain,

A mourner I, amid life's desert thrown

To feel and suffer—live and die—alone !

In 'Autumnal Musings,' which was composed on Little Haldon, overlooking Teignmouth from a point close to what antiquarians tell us are the traces of an ancient Danish encampment, there are more striking passages than any of these I have quoted ; but they are less germane to the present subject, and do not help us to solve even the question whether it was Fanny or Marian Jeffrey whose heart Keats took back to Hampstead with him.

FANNY BRAWNE AND HER MOTHER.

Although Mrs. Brawne is numbered among Keats's correspondents, there is but one letter to her ; and there is little to record save that she was the widow of a Mr. Samuel Brawne, and came to Hampstead at the time when Dilke and Brown lived at Wentworth Place, bringing her three children, Fanny, Samuel, and Margaret ;—that, having taken Keats in when she was renting and residing in one of the Wentworth Place houses, and when he left Hunt's home suddenly on account of the opening of a letter by one of Hunt's servants, the good lady did her part in nursing him. Her end was tragic : she was burnt to death, by her dress having caught fire as she stood at the door of her house in Wentworth Place.

Fanny or Frances Brawne was born on the 9th of August 1800, and was therefore at the time of Thomas Keats's death, when she came prominently into Keats's life, over 18 years of age. The story of her relations with Keats appears very clearly and fully in the letters which will be found in the fifth volume of this edition. I am not among those who think otherwise than kindly and respectfully of her. I fully believe that she was warmly attached to Keats and mourned his loss long and bitterly. Time, the healer of most wounds, healed that of Fanny Brawne sufficiently to admit of her marriage when Keats had been ten years dead. Her husband, Mr. Lindon, was known to the public as one of the Secretaries of the 1851 Exhibition. She herself was a woman of considerable character and attainment, though not known to the public. She was a contributor to Blackwood's magazine ; and I have in my possession a manuscript tale called 'Nickel Liszt' translated by her from the German, showing some literary skill. Her son, my friend Herbert Brawne-Lindon, and her daughter, Miss Margaret Lindon, hold her memory in the highest respect and affection. She died in 1865.

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

in explanation of the different types employed.

In order to prevent a difficulty that sometimes arises of distinguishing between the author and the editor, especially when author's and editor's notes to a text both occur, the following plan has been adopted. The text of the author and its variants have been printed throughout in 'old style' type, while all notes &c. added by the editor have been set in 'condensed' type. It is hoped that this innovation will be found of no small service to the general reader as well as to the student.

CORRECTIONS.

Page 58, line 15, for 'sometime' read 'some time'.

„ 62, „ 4 of second paragraph of foot-note, insert comma after 'Browning'.

„ 63, „ 5 from foot, for 'Asculapius' read 'Æsculapius'.

„ 90, „ 21, insert a dash between 'damned' and 'wholesale'.

„ 103, „ 15, delete comma after 'directions'.

„ 113, „ 25, for 'building' read 'beilding'.

„ 120, „ 13, the eighth line of the sonnet should not be indented.

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LETTERS.

LETTERS.

I.

TO CHARLES COWDEN CLARKE.

Although the Borough is a beastly place in dirt, turnings, and windings, yet No. 8 Dean Street, is not difficult to find; and if you would run the gauntlet over London Bridge, take the first turning to the right, and, moreover, knock at my door, which is nearly opposite a meeting, you would do me a charity, which, as St. Paul saith, is the father of all the virtues. At all events, let me hear from you soon: I say, at all events, not excepting the gout in your fingers.

[8 Dean Street, Borough, 1814 or 1815]

II.

TO CHARLES COWDEN CLARKE.

[31 October 1816]

My daintie Davie,

I will be as punctual as the Bee to the Clover. Very glad am I at the thoughts of seeing so soon this glorious

I. This letter probably belongs to the winter of 1814, when Keats, after parting from Mr. Hammond, was living at No. 8 Dean Street, Borough, studying Medicine at Guy's and St. Thomas's hospitals. Cowden Clarke gives the letter in his *Recollections*, without making it clear whether it is complete or an extract, but mentioning that it is neither dated nor post-marked. He says:—"When we both had come to London—Keats to enter as a student of St. Thomas's Hospital—he was not long in discovering my abode, which was with my brother-in-law in Clerkenwell; and at that time being housekeeper, and solitary, he would come and renew his loved gossip; till, as the author of the 'Urn Burial' says, 'we were acting our antipodes—the huntsmen were up in America, and they already were past their first sleep in Persia.' At the close of a letter which preceded my appointing him to come and lighten my darkness in Clerkenwell, is his first address upon coming to London... This letter... preceded our first symposium; and a memorable night it was in my life's career."

II. This note, addressed to "Mr. C. C. Clarke, Mr. Towers, Warner Street, Clerkenwell", seems to have been written before Keats's introduction to Haydon—which apparently took place at Leigh Hunt's, for in Haydon's 'Autobiography' (1853, Volume I, page 331) we read—"About this time I met John Keats, at Leigh Hunt's, and was amazingly interested by his prematurity of intellectual and poetical power... After a short time I liked him so much that a general invita-

Haydon and all his creation. I pray thee let me know when you go to Ollier's and where he resides—this I forgot to ask you—and tell me also when you will help me waste a sullen day—God 'ield you—¹

J K

III.

To BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON.

20 November 1816

My dear Sir—

Last evening wrought me up, and I cannot forbear sending you the following.

Great spirits now on earth are sojourning ;
 He of the cloud, the cataract, the lake,
 Who on Helvellyn's summit, wide awake,
 Catches his freshness from Archangel's wing :
 He of the rose, the violet, the spring,
 The social smile, the chain for Freedom's sake :
 And lo !—whose stedfastness would never take
 A meaner sound than Raphael's whispering.
 And other spirits there are standing apart
 Upon the forehead of the age to come ;

tion on my part followed, and we became extremely intimate. He visited my painting-room at all times, and at all times was welcome." In a hurried inspection of the manuscript of Keats's note, I observed no date ; but in a sale catalogue of autographs it is assigned to the 31st of October 1816.

¹ See 'Hamlet,' Act IV, Scene v. The reading is in dispute ; but, if Keats's view was the right one as to Ophelia's meaning, the words are "Well, God 'ield you ! They say the owl was a baker's daughter." The folio of 1623 reads "God dil'd you !"—the Globe edition "God 'ild you !" In a later letter Keats uses the expression "God shield us." See page 10.

III. Concerning the sonnet in this letter Lord Houghton records that "Haydon in his acknowledgment, suggested the omission of a part of it"; and the hiatus was certainly not in the sonnet originally, the line being filled up with the words *in some distant Mart* ; but in a second copy written by Keats and inserted in Haydon's journal those words are omitted and points are substituted. When this little note was printed in the second volume of 'Benjamin Robert Haydon : Correspondence and Table Talk,' the close was given thus—

"Yours imperfectly,
 John Keats."

But, although the word *unfeignedly* is not very clearly written, that is certainly the word. The correspondence with Haydon opened briskly : it will be seen that the next letter is dated the afternoon of the same day as the above.

Mr. Colvin, both in his 'Men of Letters' 'Keats' and in his edition of Keats's Letters to his Family and Friends, gives the thirteenth line of the sonnet thus—

Of mighty workings in the human mart ?

The source of this reading is not specified : it is not in the original. The three "great spirits" who are the subject of the sonnet are of course Wordsworth, Hunt, and Haydon.

These, these will give the world another heart,
 And other pulses. Hear ye not the hum
 Of mighty workings in some distant Mart?
 Listen awhile ye nations, and be dumb.

Yours unfeignedly

John Keats—

Removed to 76 Cheapside

IV.

TO BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON.

Thursday afternoon, 20 November 1816.
 [Imperfect Postmark, No. 21]

My dear Sir,

Your letter has filled me with a proud pleasure, and shall be kept by me as a stimulus to exertion—I begin to fix my eye upon one horizon. My feelings entirely fall in with yours in regard to the Ellipsis, and I glory in it. The Idea of your sending it to Wordsworth put me out of breath—you know with what Reverence I would send my Well-wishes to him.

Yours sincerely

John Keats

IV. Lord Houghton says—"It should here be remembered that Wordsworth was not then what he is now, that he was confounded with much that was thought ridiculous and unmanly in the new school, and that it was something for so young a student to have torn away the veil of prejudice then hanging over that now-honoured name, and to have proclaimed his reverence in such earnest words, while so many men of letters could only scorn or jeer." It was perhaps between this date and that of the next letter that the following excellent sonnet by Reynolds was written. I give it and the letter accompanying it, from the manuscript preserved in Haydon's journal, as a link in the chain of recollections whereby we may follow more or less closely the relations of Keats with a brilliant circle of friends :

Lamb's Cond^t. Street

Friday morning 10 o'Clock

My dear Haydon,

As you are now getting "golden opinions from all sorts of men," it was not fitting that One who is sincerely your Friend should be found wanting. Last night when you left me—I went to my bed—And the Sonnet on the other side absolutely started into my mind. I send it you, because I really *feel* your Genius, and because I know that things of this kind are the dearest rewards of Genius. It is not equal to anything you have yet had, in power, I know;—but it is sincere, and that is a recommendation. Will you, at my desire, send a copy to Mr. Keats, and say to him, how much I was pleased with his. Yours affectionately

J. H. Reynolds

SONNET TO HAYDON

Haydon!—Thou'rt born to Immortality!—
 I look full on;—and Fame's Eternal Star
 Shines out o'er Ages which are yet afar;—
 It hangs in all its radiance over thee!

V.

To CHARLES COWDEN CLARKE.

Tuesday—

[Postmark, Lombard Street,
17 December 1816.]

My dear Charles,

You may now look at Minerva's Ægis with impunity, seeing that my awful Visage did not turn you into a John Doree. You have accordingly a legitimate title to a Copy—I will use my interest to procure it for you. I'll tell you what—I met Reynolds at Haydon's a few mornings since—he promised to be with me this Evening and Yesterday I had the same promise from Severn and I must put you in Mind that on last All hallowmas' day you gave me your word that you would spend this Evening with me—so no putting off. I have done little to Endymion¹ lately—I hope to finish it in one more attack—I believe you I went to Richards's—it was so whoreson a Night that I stopped there all the next day. His Remembrances to you. (Ext. from the common place Book of my Mind—Mem.—Wednesday—Hampstead—call in Warner Street—a Sketch of Mr. Hunt.)—I will ever consider you my sincere and affectionate friend—you will not doubt that I am your's.

God bless you—

John Keats—

I watch whole Nations o'er thy works sublime
 Bending;—And breathing,—while their spirits glow,—
 Thy name with that of the stern Angelo,
 Whose giant genius braves the hate of Time!
 But not alone in agony and strife
 Art thou majestic;—Thy fancies bring
 Sweets from the sweet:—The loveliness of life
 Melts from thy pencil like the breath of Spring.
 Soul is within thee:—Honours wait without thee:—
 The wings of Raphael's Spirit play about thee!

J. H. Reynolds

In Haydon's writing, underneath the sonnet, is the note, "Wild enthusiasm—B. R. Haydon, 1842."

V. This letter, addressed similarly to No. II, probably refers to one of Severn's portraits of Keats.

¹ The reference is to the short poem originally so called, but ultimately published in 1817 without a title. It begins with the words "I stood tip-toe upon a little hill," and will be found at pages 7 to 13 of the first volume of the Poems in this edition. I presume Richards is the printer of the 1817 volume,—C. Richards of 18 Warwick Street, Golden Square.

VI.

To JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS.

Sunday Evening [March 1817.]

My dear Reynolds

Your kindness¹ affects me so sensibly that I can merely put down a few mono-sentences—your criticism only makes me extremely anxious that I should not deceive you.

It's the finest thing by God—as Hazlitt would say. However I hope I may not deceive you.—There are some acquaintances of mine who will scratch their Beards and although I have, I hope, some Charity, I wish their nails may be long.—I will be ready at the time you mention in all Happiness.

There is a report that a young Lady² of 16 has written the new Tragedy God bless her—I will know her by Hook or by Crook in less than a week—My Brothers' and my Remembrances to your kind sisters.

yours most sincerely

John Keats

VII.

To JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS.

[March 1817.]

My dear Reynolds,

My Brothers are anxious that I should go by myself into the country—they have always been extremely fond of me, and now that Haydon has pointed out how necessary it is that I should be alone to improve myself, they give up the temporary pleasure of living with me continually for a great good which I hope will follow. So I shall soon be out of Town. You must

¹ Reynolds praised him in a sonnet.

² I have not found any positive trace of this report; but it may possibly have had reference to a young lady in the theatrical profession, who had been driven thereto by the untimely death of her father. Miss Macauley, an actress who had made some reputation on the London stage by the end of 1818, was also an authoress—had published 'Macauley's Literary Amusements' while in Macready's Company at Newcastle. Reports such as Keats alludes to were current about her in the next year, as witness the following contradiction from 'The Literary Inquisitor' for December 1818:—"The forthcoming Romance, at Drury Lane Theatre, is not from the pen of Mr. Soane, nor from that of Miss Macauley, but from Mr. Stephen Kemble's."

VII. Lord Houghton says Keats "found himself on his first entrance into manhood...with many friends interested in his fortunes, and with the faith in the future which generally accompanies the highest genius. Mr. Haydon seems to have been to him a wise and prudent counsellor, and to have encouraged him to brace his powers by undistracted study, while he advised him to leave London for awhile, and take more care of his health. The following note, written in March, shows that Keats did as he was recommended." The date of Haydon's letter to Keats on the Elgin Marbles Sonnets (Volume II, page 562) appears from the manuscript in his journal to be the 3rd of March 1817. The passage omitted from the end of the first paragraph, as given in the 'Correspondence,' is "You filled me

soon bring all your present troubles to a close, and so must I, but we must, like the Fox, prepare for a fresh swarm of flies. Banish money—Banish sofas—Banish Wine—Banish Music; but right Jack Health, honest Jack Health, true Jack Health—Banish Health and banish all the world.¹ I must . . . myself . . .² if I come this evening, I shall horribly commit myself elsewhere. So I will send my excuses to them and Mrs. Dilke by my brothers.

Your sincere friend

John Keats

with fury for an hour, and with admiration for ever"; and in a postscript he says "I shall expect you and Clarke and Reynolds tonight." The second paragraph seems to have been an afterthought, for it runs thus in the manuscript—

My dear Keats,

I have really opened my letter to tell you how deeply I feel the high enthusiastic praise with which you have spoken of me in the first Sonnet—be assured you shall never repent it—the time shall come if God spare my life—when you will remember it with delight—

Once more God bless you

B R Haydon.

The following highly remarkable letter, of which also an extract is given in the 'Correspondence,' appears, like the foregoing, to have been written before Keats carried out the intention of going into the Country, for a leaf fastened into Haydon's journal with it, apparently its cover, bears the address "John Keats, 76 Cheapside". I say "apparently" because the one leaf was evidently once attached to the other, and the outer one bears on the inside the words "I confide these feelings to your honor". The occasion is the recent issue of the 'Poems' of 1817:—

My dear Keats,

Consider this letter a sacred secret.—Often have I sat by my fire after a day's effort, as the dusk approached, and a gauzey veil seemed dimming all things—and mused on what I had done, and with a burning glow on what I would do till filled with fury I have seen the faces of the mighty dead crowd into my room, and I have sunk down and prayed the great Spirit that I might be worthy to accompany these immortal beings in their immortal glories, and then I have seen each smile as it passed over me, and each shake his hand in awful encouragement. My dear Keats, the Friends who surrounded me were sensible to what talent I had,—but no one reflected my enthusiasm with that burning ripeness of soul, my heart yearned for sympathy,—believe me from my soul, in you I have found one,—you add fire, when I am exhausted, and excite fury afresh—I offer my heart and intellect and experience—at first I feared your ardor might lead you to disregard the accumulated wisdom of ages in moral points—but the feelings put forth lately have delighted my soul—always consider principle of more value than genius—and you are safe—because on the score of genius, you can never be vehement enough. I have read your "Sleep and Poetry"—it is a flash of lightning that will rouse men from their occupations, and keep them trembling for the crash of thunder that *will* follow.

God bless you! let our hearts be buried on each other.

B. R. Haydon.

I'll be at Reynolds tonight but latish.

March 1817.

¹ "No, my good Lord, banish *Peto*, banish *Bardolph*, banish *Poines*: but for sweete *Jacke Falstaffe*, kinde *Jacke Falstaffe*, valiant *Jacke Falstaffe*, and therefore more valiant, being as hee is olde *Jack Falstaffe*, banish not him thy Harryes companie, banish not him thy Harryes companie; banish plumpe *Jacke*, and banish all the world." (The First Part of King Henry the Fourth, Act II, Scene iv.)

² The original letter is torn: hence these verbal omissions.

VIII.

To GEORGE AND THOMAS KEATS.

Tuesday Morn—[15 April 1817]
[Postmark, 16 April 1817.]

My dear Brothers,

I am safe at Southampton—after having ridden three stages outside and the rest in for it began to be very cold. I did not know the Names of any of the Towns I passed through—all I can tell you is that sometimes I saw dusty Hedges—sometimes Ponds—then nothing—then a little Wood with trees look you like Launce's Sister "as white as a Lilly and as small as a Wand"—then came houses which died away into a few straggling Barns—then came hedge trees aforesaid again. As the Lamp-light crept along the following things were discovered—"long heath broom furze"—Hurdles here and there half a Mile—Park palings when the Windows of a House were always discovered by reflection—One Nymph of Fountain—*N.B. Stone*—lopped Trees—Cow ruminating—ditto Donkey—Man and Woman going gingerly along—William seeing his Sisters over the Heath—John waiting with a Lanthorn for his Mistress—Barber's Pole—Doctor's¹ Shop—However after having had my fill of these I popped my Head out just as it began to Dawn—*N.B. this tuesday Morn saw the Sun rise*—of which I shall say nothing at present. I felt rather lonely this Morning at breakfast so I went and unbox'd a Shakspeare—"There's my Comfort"²—I went immediately after Breakfast to Southampton Water where I enquired for the Boat to the Isle of Wight as I intend seeing that place before I settle—it will go at 3, so shall I after having taken a Chop—I know nothing of this place but that it is long—tolerably broad—has by streets—two or three Churches—a very respectable old Gate with two Lions to guard it—the Men and Women do not materially differ from those I have been in the Habit of seeing—I forgot to say that from dawn till half past

VIII. This letter, which is doubtless the one referred to in the first line of the text, is preserved in Haydon's journal, and is addressed to "Mr G. Keats, No. 1 Well Walk, Hampstead, Middx." The trees which recalled Shakespeare (Launce's Sister, 'Two Gentlemen of Verona') to Keats's mind, as almost everything appears to have done at this time, were doubtless the same kind of silver birch that he afterwards noticed on Hampstead Heath, where they may still be seen in abundance.

¹ In the holograph 'Lanthorn' is misspelt 'Lanthen', and 'Doctor's' is misspelt 'Docter's'.

² See 'The Tempest,' Act II, Scene ii :—

Stephano. I shall no more to sea, to sea, here shall I dye ashore.

This is a very scurvy tune to sing at a mans

Funerall : well, here's my comfort. [*Drinks.*]

Sings. The Master, the Swabber, the Boate-swaine & I;

* * * *

This is a scurvy tune too;

But here's my comfort. *drinks.*

six I went through a most delightful Country—some open Down but for the most part thickly wooded. What surprised me most was an immense quantity of blooming Furze on each side the road cutting a most rural dash. The Southampton Water when I saw it just now was no better than a low-water Water which did no more than answer my expectations—it will have mended its Manners by 3. From the Wharf are seen the shores on each side stretching to the Isle of Wight. You, Haydon, Reynolds &c. have been pushing each other out of my Brain by turns—I have conned over every Head in Haydon's Picture—you must warn them not to be afraid should my Ghost visit them on Wednesday—tell Haydon to Kiss his Hand at Betty over the Way for me yea and to spy at her for me. I hope one of you will be competent to take part in a Trio while I am away—you need only aggravate¹ your voices a little and mind not to speak Cues and all—when you have said Rum-ti-ti—you must not be rum any more or else another will take up the ti-ti alone and then he might be taken God shield² us for little better than a Titmouse. By the by talking of Titmouse Remember me particularly to all my Friends—give my Love to the Miss Reynoldses and to Fanny who I hope you will soon see. Write to me soon about them all—and you George particularly how you get on with Wilkinson's plan. What could I have done without my Plaid? I don't feel inclined to write any more at present for I feel rather muzzy—you must be content with this fac simile of the rough plan of Aunt Dinah's Counterpane.³

Your most affectionate Brother

John Keats

Reynolds shall hear from me soon.

IX.

To JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS.

Carisbrooke,

April 17th, 1817.

My Dear Reynolds,

Ever since I wrote to my Brothers from Southampton, I have been in a taking, and at this moment I am about to become settled, for I have unpacked my books, put them into a snug corner, pinned up Haydon, Mary Queen of Scots, and Milton with his daughters in a row. In the passage I found a

¹ The original reads 'aggravate'.

² See foot-note at page 4, *ante*.

³ The letter was "crossed," so as to resemble roughly a chess-board or a patch-work quilt.

IX. Lord Houghton, speaking here of Reynolds, calls attention to the "invaluable worth of his friendship to Keats," and says "one can only regret that both portions of" their "correspondence are not preserved."

head of Shakspeare, which I had not before seen. It is most likely the same that George spoke so well of, for I like it extremely. Well—this head I have hung over my books, just above the three in a row, having first discarded a French Ambassador—now this alone is a good morning's work. Yesterday I went to Shanklin, which occasioned a great debate in my mind whether I should live there or at Carisbrooke. Shanklin is a most beautiful place; sloping wood and meadow ground reach round the Chine, which is a cleft between the Cliffs of the depth of nearly 300 feet at least. This cleft is filled with trees and bushes in the narrow part, and as it widens becomes bare, if it were not for primroses on one side, which spread to the very verge of the Sea, and some fishermen's huts on the other, perched midway in the Balustrades of beautiful green Hedges along their steps down to the sands. But the sea, Jack, the sea—the little waterfall—then the white cliff—then St. Catherine's Hill—"the sheep in the meadows, the cows in the corn." Then, why are you at Carisbrooke? say you. Because, in the first place, I should be at twice the Expense, and three times the inconvenience—next that from here I can see your continent—from a little hill close by, the whole north Angle of the Isle of Wight, with the water between us. In the 3rd place, I see Carisbrooke Castle from my window, and have found several delightful wood-alleys, and copses, and quick freshes.¹ As for primroses, the Island ought to be called Primrose Island—that is, if the nation of Cowslips agree thereto, of which there are divers Clans just beginning to lift up their heads. Another reason of my fixing is, that I am more in reach of the places around me. I intend to walk over the Island east—West—North—South. I have not seen many specimens of Ruins—I don't think however I shall ever see one to surpass Carisbrooke Castle. The trench is overgrown with the smoothest turf, and the Walls with ivy. The Keep within side is one Bower of ivy—a colony of Jackdaws have been there for many years. I dare say I have seen many a descendant of some old cawer who peeped through the bars at Charles the First, when he was there in Confinement. On the road from Cowes to Newport I saw some extensive Barracks, which disgusted me extremely with the Government for placing such a Nest of Debauchery in so beautiful a place. I asked a man on the coach about this—and he said that the people had been

¹ See 'The Tempest,' Act III, Scene ii :—

Caliban [to Stephano]. I do beseech thy Greatnesse
give him blowes,
And take his bottle from him : When that's gone,
He shall drink nought but brine, for Ile not shew him
Where the quicke Freshes are.

spoiled. In the room where I slept at Newport, I found this on the Window—"O Isle spoilt by the Military!" I must in honesty however confess that I did not feel very sorry at the idea of the Women being a little profligate.

The wind is in a sulky fit, and I feel that it would be no bad thing to be the favourite of some Fairy, who would give one the power of seeing how our Friends got on at a Distance. I should like, of all Loves, a sketch of you and Tom and George in ink which Haydon will do if you tell him how I want them. From want of regular rest I have been rather *narvus*—and the passage in *Lear*—"Do you not hear the sea?"—has haunted me intensely.

It keeps eternal whisperings around
Desolate shores, and with its mighty swell
Gluts twice ten thousand Caverns, till the spell
Of Hecate leaves them their old shadowy sound.
Often 'tis in such gentle temper found,
That scarcely will the very smallest shell
Be mov'd for days from whence it sometime fell,
When last the winds of Heaven were unbound.
O ye! who have your eye-balls vex'd and tir'd,
Feast them upon the wideness of the Sea;
O ye! whose Ears are dinn'd with uproar rude,
Or fed too much with cloying melody—
Sit ye near some old Cavern's Mouth, and brood
Until ye start, as if the sea-nymphs quired.

April 18th [1817].

Will you have the goodness to do this? Borrow a Botanical Dictionary—turn to the words Laurel and Prunus, show the explanations to your sisters and Mrs. Dilke and without more ado let them send me the Cups, Basket and Books they trifled and put off and off while I was in Town. Ask them what they can say for themselves—ask Mrs. Dilke wherefore she does so distress me—let me know how Jane has her health—the Weather is unfavourable for her.—Tell George and Tom to write. I'll tell you what—on the 23d was Shakespeare born. Now if I should receive a letter from you, and another from my Brothers on that day 'twould be a parlous good thing. Whenever you write say a word or two on some Passage in Shakespeare that may have come rather new to you, which must be continually happening, notwithstanding that we read the same Play forty times—for instance, the following from the Tempest never struck me so forcibly as at present,

"Urchins

*Shall, for the vast of night that they may work,
All exercise on thee—"*

How can I help bringing to your mind the line—

“In the dark backward and abysm of time.”

I find I cannot exist without Poetry—without eternal Poetry—half the day will not do—the whole of it—I began with a little, but habit has made me a Leviathan. I had become all in a Tremble from not having written anything of late—the Sonnet over-leaf did me good. I slept the better last night for it—this Morning, however, I am nearly as bad again. Just now I opened Spenser, and the first Lines I saw were these—

“The noble heart that harbours virtuous thought,
And is with child of glorious great intent,
Can never rest until it forth have brought
Th’ eternal brood of glory excellent—”

Let me know particularly about Haydon, ask him to write to me about Hunt, if it be only ten lines—I hope all is well—I shall forthwith begin my *Endymion*,¹ which I hope I shall have got some way with by the time you come, when we will read our verses in a delightful place I have set my heart upon, near the Castle. Give my Love to your Sisters severally—to George and Tom. Remember me to Rice, Mr. and Mrs. Dilke and all we know.

Your sincere friend

John K ats

Direct J. Keats, Mrs. Cook’s, New Village, Carisbrooke.

X.

TO LEIGH HUNT.

Margate, 10 May, 1817.

My dear Hunt,

The little gentleman that sometimes lurks in a gossip’s bowl, ought to have come in the very likeness of a *roasted* crab, and choaked me outright for not answering your letter ere this: however, you must not suppose that I was in town to receive it: no, it followed me to the Isle of Wight, and I got it just as I was going to pack up for Margate, for reasons which you anon shall hear. On arriving at this treeless affair, I wrote to

¹ This refers to the real ‘*Endymion*,’ to be published in the following year.

X. This letter first appeared, with some omissions, in ‘*Lord Byron and some of his Contemporaries*.’ Thornton Hunt supplied the blanks in editing his father’s Correspondence. There are many variations, besides; and I have followed in each case what seemed the likelier reading. Leigh Hunt, for instance, makes Margate a ‘treeless affair,’ Thornton Hunt makes it a ‘treeless place’: the father makes old Wood ‘sharded in covetousness’—the son ‘shrouded.’ The C.C.C. referred to is of course Charles Cowden Clarke.

my brother George to request C. C. C. to do the thing you wot of respecting *Rimini*; and George tells me he has undertaken it with great pleasure; so I hope there has been an understanding between you for many proofs: C. C. C. is well acquainted with Bensley. Now why did you not send the key of your cupboard, which, I know, was full of papers? We would have locked them all in a trunk, together with those you told me to destroy, which indeed I did not do, for fear of demolishing receipts, there not being a more unpleasant thing in the world (saving a thousand and one others) than to pay a bill twice. Mind you, old Wood's a "very varmint," shrouded in covetousness:—and now I am upon a horrid subject—what a horrid one you were upon last Sunday, and well you handled it.¹ The last *Examiner* was a battering-ram against Christianity, blasphemy, Tertullian, Erasmus, Sir Philip Sidney; and then the dreadful Petzelians and their expiation by blood; and do Christians shudder at the same thing in a newspaper which they attribute to their God in its most aggravated form? What is to be the end of this? I must mention Hazlitt's Southey.²

¹ Hunt's article in 'The Examiner' for the 4th of May 1817 here alluded to was the seventh of a series of Letters to the English People. It treated of religious intolerance, defined *blasphemy* from different points of view, and reduced *ad absurdum* the blasphemy prosecutions of the day. The term 'Petzelians' needs elucidation, especially as the word was formerly printed 'Patzelicians.' The sect does not figure in Hunt's Seventh Letter; but in another part of the paper is the following paragraph:—

"VIENNA, APRIL 16.—Letters from Upper Austria speak of a Sect formed there, called Petzelians, from the name of the founder, Petzel, a Priest of Branaw. Atrocious accounts are related of this Sect. In imitation of the Spenceans of England, they preach the equality and community of property, and they sacrifice (I dare scarcely touch upon these horrors) men, to purify others from their sins. It is added, that this Sect sacrificed, during Passion Week, several men, who died in the most horrible torments. A girl of 13 was put to death in the village of Afflewang, on Good Friday. Seven men have been the victims of this abominable faith. The author of the Sect, Petzel, with 86 followers, are arrested: military detachments have been quartered in the villages, and tranquillity has been restored to the hearts of the wretched inhabitants. Petzel has been sent to the fortress of Spielberg, where he will soon be brought to trial."

² Hazlitt's 'Southey,' in the 'Examiner' just mentioned, was the first part, to be followed by a second and third, of a review of a pamphlet entitled 'A Letter to William Smith, Esq. M.P. from Robert Southey, Esq.' (Murray 1817). The occasion of the letter was the fact that Mr. Smith, in a discussion in Parliament, had compared certain passages in 'The Quarterly Review' with the opinions held by Southey twenty-three years earlier, when he wrote 'Wat Tyler,' a comparison made pointedly to the disadvantage of Southey. To appreciate fully the soundness of the young poet's taste in this matter, we must have the particular passage in evidence. Here it is:—

"As some persons bequeath their bodies to the surgeons to be dissected after their death, Mr. Southey publicly exposes his mind to be anatomised while he is living. He lays open his character to the scalping knife, guides the philosophic

O that he had left out the grey hairs; or that they had been in any other paper not concluding with such a thunderclap! That sentence about making a page of the feeling of a whole life, appears to me like a whale's back in the sea of prose. I ought to have said a word on Shakspeare's Christianity. There are two which I have not looked over with you, touching the thing: the one for, the other against: that in favour is in *Measure for Measure*, Act II, Scene 2,

Isab. Alas, alas!

Why all the souls that were, were forfeit once;
And he that might the 'vantage best have took,
Found out the remedy.

hand in its painful researches, and on the bald crown of our *petit tondou*, in vain concealed under withered bay-leaves and a few contemptible grey hairs, you see the organ of vanity triumphant—sleek,—smooth, round, perfect, polished, horned and shining, as it were in a transparency. This is the handle of his intellect, the index of his mind; 'the guide, the anchor of his purest thoughts, and soul of all his moral being;' the clue to the labyrinth of all his tergiversations and contradictions; the *medius terminus* of his political logic."

The "concluding thunderclap," and the sentence "like a whale's back in the sea of prose," are as follows:—

"In advocating the cause of the French people, Mr. Southey's principles and his interest were at variance, and therefore he quitted his principles when he saw a good opportunity: in taking up the cause of the Allies, his principles and his interest became united and thenceforth indissoluble. His engagement to his first love, the Republic, was only upon liking; his marriage to Legitimacy is *for better, for worse*, and nothing but death shall part them. Our simple Laureate was sharp upon his hoyden Jacobin mistress, who brought him no dowry, neither place nor pension, who 'found him poor and kept him so,' by her prudish notions of virtue. He divorced her, in short, for nothing but the spirit and success with which she resisted the fraud and force to which the old bawd Legitimacy was for ever resorting to overpower her resolution and fidelity. He said she was a virago, a cunning gipsy, always in broils about her honour and the inviolability of her person, and always getting the better in them, furiously scratching the face or cruelly tearing off the hair of the said pimping old lady, who would never let her alone, night or day. But since her foot slipped one day on the ice, and the detestable old hag tripped up her heels, and gave her up to the kind keeping of the Allied Sovereigns, Mr. Southey has devoted himself to her more fortunate and wealthy rival: he is becoming uxorious in his second matrimonial connection; and though his false Duessa has turned out a very witch, a foul, ugly witch, a murderess, a sorceress, perjured, and a harlot, drunk with insolence, mad with power, a griping rapacious wretch, bloody, luxurious, wanton, malicious, not sparing steel, or poison, or gold, to gain her ends—bringing famine, pestilence, and death in her train—infesting the air with her thoughts, killing the beholders with her looks, claiming mankind as her property, and using them as her slaves—driving every thing before her, and playing the devil wherever she comes, Mr. Southey sticks to her in spite of every thing, and for very shame lays his head in her lap, paddles with the palms of her hands, inhales her hateful breath, leers in her eyes and whispers in her ears, calls her little fondling names, Religion, Morality, and Social Order, takes for his motto,

'Be to her faults a little blind,
Be to her virtues very kind'—

That against is in *Twelfth Night*, Act III, Scene 2,

Maria. For there is no Christian that means to be saved by believing rightly, can ever believe such impossible passages of grossness.

Before I come to the Nymphs, I must get through all disagreeables. I went to the Isle of Wight, thought so much about poetry, so long together, that I could not get to sleep at night; and, moreover, I know not how it was, I could not get wholesome food. By this means, in a week or so, I became not overcapable in my upper stories, and set off pell-mell for Margate, at least a hundred and fifty miles, because, forsooth, I fancied that I should like my old lodging here, and could contrive to do without trees. Another thing, I was too much in solitude, and consequently was obliged to be in continual burning of thought, as an only resource.¹ However, Tom is with me at present, and we are very comfortable. We intend, though, to get among some trees. How have you got on among them? How are the *Nymphs*?² I suppose they have led you a fine dance. Where are you now?—in Judea, Cappadocia, or the parts of Libya about Cyrene? Stranger from "Heaven, Hues, and Prototypes," I wager you have given several new turns to the old saying, "Now the maid was fair and pleasant to look on," as well as made a little variation in "Once upon a time." Perhaps, too, you have rather varied, "Here endeth the first lesson." Thus

sticks close to his filthy bargain, and will not give her up, because she keeps him, and he is down in her will. Faugh!

'What's here?

Gold! yellow, glittering, precious gold!

—The wappened widow,

Whom the spittle-house and ulcerous sores

Would heave the gorge at, this embalms and spices

To the April day again.'

The above passage is, we fear, written in the style of Aretin, which Mr. Southey condemns in the 'Quarterly.' It is at least a very sincere style: Mr. Southey will never write so, till he can keep in the same mind for three and twenty years together. Why should not one make a sentence of a page long, out of the feelings of one's whole life? The early Protestant Divines wrote such prodigious long sentences from the sincerity of their religious and political opinions. Mr. Coleridge ought not to imitate them."

Truly there was enough of biting invective here to have enabled Hazlitt to dispense with the grim personality about the grey hairs!

¹ His friend Dilke characterizes this passage, from *I went*, as "An exact picture of the man's mind and character," adding, "He could at any time have 'thought himself out' mind and body. Thought was intense with him, and seemed at times to assume a reality that influenced his conduct—and I have no doubt helped to wear him out."

² Shelley, writing to Hunt ten months later, says—"I have read *Foliage*, with most of the poems I am already familiar. What a delightful poem the 'Nymphs' is! especially the second part. It is truly *poetical*, in this intense and emphatic sense of the word." (Prose Works, Volume IV, page 4.)

I hope you have made a horseshoe business of "unsuperfluous life," "faint bowers," and fibrous roots. I vow that I have been down in the mouth lately at this work. These last two days, however, I have felt more confident—I have asked myself so often why I should be a poet more than other men, seeing how great a thing it is,—how great things are to be gained by it, what a thing to be in the mouth of Fame,—that at last the idea has grown so monstrously beyond my seeming power of attainment, that the other day I nearly consented with myself to drop into a Phaeton. Yet, 'tis a disgrace to fail, even in a huge attempt; and at this moment I drive the thought from me. I began my poem about a fortnight since, and have done some every day, except travelling ones. Perhaps I may have done a good deal for the time, but it appears such a pin's point to me, that I will not copy any out. When I consider that so many of these pin-points go to form a bodkin-point, (God send I end not my life with a bare bodkin, in its modern sense!) and that it requires a thousand bodkins to make a spear bright enough to throw any light to posterity, I see nothing but continual up-hill journeying. Now is there any thing more unpleasant (it may come among the thousand and one) than to be so journeying and to miss the goal at last? But I intend to whistle all these cogitations into the sea, where I hope they will breed storms violent enough to block up all exit from Russia. Does Shelley go on telling strange stories of the deaths of kings?¹ Tell him, there are strange stories of the deaths of poets. Some have died before they were conceived. "How do you make that out, Master Vellum?" Does Mrs. S. cut bread and butter as neatly as ever? Tell her to procure some fatal scissors, and cut the thread of life of all to-be-disappointed poets. Does Mrs. Hunt tear linen as straight as ever? Tell her to tear from the book of life all blank leaves. Remember me to them all; to Miss Kent and the little ones all.

Your sincere friend

John Keats alias Junkets—

You shall hear where we move.

¹ Hunt records that "Mr. Shelley was fond of quoting the passage here alluded to in Shakspeare, and of applying it in the most unexpected manner.

For God's sake, let us sit upon the ground,
And tell strange stories of the deaths of kings.

Going with me to town once in the Hampstead stage, in which our only companion was an old lady, who sat silent and stiff after the English fashion, he startled her into a look of the most ludicrous astonishment by saying abruptly; 'Hunt,

For God's sake, let us sit upon the ground,' &c.

The old lady looked on the coach-floor, as if she expected to see us take our seats accordingly." Hunt adds—"The reader... will be touched by the melancholy anticipations that follow, and that are made in so good-humoured a manner." He explains that 'Junkets' was "an appellation that was given him in play upon his name, and in allusion to his friends of Fairy-land."

XI.

To BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON.

41 Great Marlborough Street, London.

Margate Saturday Eve [10 May 1817].
[Postmark, 13 May 1817.]

My dear Haydon,

Let Fame, that all pant after in their lives,
Live register'd upon our brazen tombs,
And so grace us in the disgrace of death :
When spite of cormorant devouring time
The endeavour of this present breath may buy
That Honor which shall bate his Scythe's keen edge
And make us heirs of all eternity.

To think that I have no right to couple myself with you in this speech would be death to me, so I have e'en written it, and I pray God that our "brazen tombs" be nigh neighbours. It cannot be long first; the "endeavour of this present breath" will soon be over, and yet it is as well to breathe freely during our sojourn—it is as well as if you have not been teased with that Money affair, that bill-pestilence. However, I must think that difficulties nerve the Spirit of a Man—they make our Prime Objects a Refuge as well as a Passion. The Trumpet of Fame is as a tower of Strength, the ambitious bloweth it and is safe. I suppose, by your telling me not to give way to forebodings, George has mentioned to you what I have lately said in my Letters to him—truth is I have been in such a state of Mind as to read over my Lines and hate them. I am one that "gathers

XL As regards the quotation from the opening speech in 'Love's Labour's Lost,' it is to be pointed out that the word 'pant' in line 1 should be 'hunt,' and 'so' in line 3 should be 'then.' Lord Houghton says of the reference to the "brazen tombs"—"To the copy of this letter, given me by Mr. Haydon on the 14th of May, 1846, a note was affixed at this place, in the words 'Perhaps they may be.'" On the original letter stands the note "I wonder if they will be B. R. Haydon." In Haydon's 'Correspondence and Table-Talk,' Volume II, pages 2 and 3, is a letter to Keats dated the 11th of May, to which this is an obvious rejoinder. It would seem that there was some mistake about the day on one side or the other. This is an excellent example of the kind of influence the painter exercised on the poet, to whom he says—"I have been intending to write to you every hour this week, but have been so interrupted that the postman rang his bell every night in vain, and with a sound that made my heart quake. I think you did quite right to leave the Isle of Wight if you felt no relief; and being quite alone, after study you can now devote your eight hours a-day with just as much seclusion as ever. Do not give way to any forebodings. They are nothing more than the over-eager anxieties of a great spirit stretched beyond its strength, and then relapsing for a time to languid inefficiency. Every man of great views is, at times, thus tormented, but begin again where you left off without hesitation or fear. Trust in God with all your might, my dear Keats. This dependence, with your own energy, will give you strength, and hope, and comfort. I am always in trouble, and wants, and distresses; here I found a refuge. From my soul I

Samphire, dreadful trade"—the Cliff of Poesy towers above me—yet when Tom who meets with some of Pope's Homer in Plutarch's Lives reads some of those to me they seem like Mice to mine. I read and write about eight hours a day. There is an old saying "well begun is half done"—'tis a bad one. I would use instead, "Not begun at all till half done;" so according to that I have not begun my Poem and consequently (*à priori*) can say nothing about it. Thank God! I do begin arduously where I leave off, notwithstanding occasional depressions; and I hope for the support of a High Power while I climb this little eminence, and especially in my Years of more momentous Labor. I remember your saying that you had notions of a good Genius presiding over you. I have of late had the same thought, for things which [I] do half at Random are afterwards confirmed by my judgment in a dozen features of Propriety. Is it too daring to fancy Shakespeare this Presider? When in the Isle of Wight I met with a Shakespeare in the Passage of the House at which I lodged—it comes nearer to my idea of him than any I have seen—I was but there a Week, yet the old woman made me take it with me though I went off in a hurry. Do you not think this is ominous of good? I am glad you say every man of great views is at times tormented as I am.

Sunday after [11 May 1817]. This Morning I received a letter from George by which it appears that Money Troubles are to follow us up for some time to come—perhaps for always—these vexations are a great hindrance to one—they are not like Envy and detraction stimulants to further exertion as being immediately relative and reflected on at the same time with the prime object—but rather like a nettle leaf or two in your bed. So now I revoke my Promise of finishing my Poem by the

declare to you I never applied for help, or for consolation, or for strength, but I found it. I always rose up from my knees with a refreshed fury, an iron-clenched firmness, a crystal piety of feeling that sent me streaming on with a repulsive power against the troubles of life. Never despair while there is this path open to you. By habitual exercise you will have habitual intercourse and constant companionship; and at every want turn to the Great Star of your hopes with a delightful confidence that will never be disappointed. I love you like my own brother: Beware, for God's sake, of the delusions and sophistications that are ripping up the talents and morality of our friend! He will go out of the world the victim of his own weakness and the dupe of his own self-delusions, with the contempt of his enemies and the sorrow of his friends, and the cause he undertook to support injured by his own neglect of character. I wish you would come up to town for a day or two that I may put your head in my picture. I have rubbed in Wordsworth's, and advanced the whole. God bless you, my dear Keats! do not despair; collect incident, study character, read Shakespeare, and trust in Providence, and you will do, you must." Mr. Frederick Wordsworth Haydon says the passage about "our friend" and his sophistications "is in reference to Leigh Hunt." The allusion to the postman vainly ringing his bell points to the time when letters were collected in London by postmen carrying hand-bells. See 'St. Martin's-le-Grand' for July 1892 (Volume II, page 197).

Autumn which I should have done had I gone on as I have done—but I cannot write while my spirit is fevered in a contrary direction and I am now sure of having plenty of it this Summer. At this moment I am in no enviable Situation—I feel that I am not in a Mood to write any to-day; and it appears that the loss of it is the beginning of all sorts of irregularities. I am extremely glad that a time must come when every thing will leave not a wrack behind. You tell me never to despair—I wish it was as easy for me to observe the saying—truth is I have a horrid Morbidity of Temperament which has shown itself at intervals—it is I have no doubt the greatest Enemy and stumbling block I have to fear—I may even say that it is likely to be the cause of my disappointment. However every ill has its share of good—this very bane would at any time enable me to look with an obstinate eye on the Devil Himself—aye to be as proud of being the lowest of the human race as Alfred could be in being of the highest. I feel confident I should have been a rebel angel had the opportunity been mine. I am very sure that you do love me as your very Brother—I have seen it in your continual anxiety for me—and I assure you that your welfare and fame is and will be a chief pleasure to me all my Life. I know no one but you who can be fully sensible of the turmoil and anxiety, the sacrifice of all what is called comfort, the readiness to measure time by what is done and to die in six hours could plans be brought to conclusions—the looking upon the Sun, the Moon, the Stars, the Earth and its contents, as materials to form greater things—that is to say ethereal things—but here I am talking like a Madman,—greater things than our Creator himself made!!

I wrote to Hunt yesterday—scarcely know what I said in it. I could not talk about Poetry in the way I should have liked for I was not in humor with either his or mine. His self delusions are very lamentable—they have inticed him into a Situation which I should be less eager after than that of a galley Slave—what you observe thereon is very true must be in time.

Perhaps it is a self delusion to say so—but I think I could not be deceived in the manner that Hunt is—may I die to-morrow if I am to be. There is no greater Sin after the seven deadly than to flatter oneself into an idea of being a great Poet—or one of those beings who are privileged to wear out their Lives in the pursuit of Honor—how comfortable a feel it is to feel that such a Crime must bring its heavy Penalty? That if one be a Self-deluder accounts must be balanced? I am glad you are hard at Work—'t will now soon be done—I long to see Wordsworth's as well as to have mine in:¹ but I would rather

¹ The objects of this longing were the portraits of Wordsworth and Keats in Haydon's picture of the Entry of Christ into Jerusalem.

not show my face in Town till the end of the Year—if that will be time enough—if not I shall be disappointed if you do not write for me even when you think best. I never quite despair and I read Shakespeare—indeed I shall I think never read any other Book much. Now this might lead me into a long Confab but I desist. I am very near agreeing with Hazlitt that Shakespeare is enough for us. By the by what a tremendous Southean article his last was—I wish he had left out “grey hairs.”¹ It was very gratifying to meet your remarks on the manuscript²—I was reading Anthony and Cleopatra when I got the Paper and there are several Passages applicable to the events you commentate. You say that he arrived by degrees and not by any single struggle to the height of his ambition—and that his Life had been as common in particulars as other Men’s. Shakespeare makes Enobarb say—

Where’s Antony?

Eros—He’s walking in the garden, and *spurns*
The rush that lies before him ; cries, Fool, Lepidus !

In the same scene we find—

Let determined things

To destiny hold unbewailed their way.

Dolabella says of Anthony’s Messenger,

An argument that he is pluck’d when hither
 He sends so poor a pinion of his wing.

Then again—

Eno.—I see Men’s Judgments are
 A parcel of their fortunes ; and things outward
 Do draw the inward quality after them,
 To suffer all alike.

The following applies well to Bertram : ³

Yet he that can endure
 To follow with allegiance a fallen Lord,

¹ See pages 14 and 15.

² Haydon’s “remarks on the manuscript” are the views put forward by the painter in a letter to ‘The Examiner’ for the 4th of May 1817 on the subject of a book which made a great stir at the time,—‘Manuscrit Venu de St. Hélène.’ It is not a favourable example of Haydon’s contributions to ‘The Examiner.’ The conclusion is as follows:—“Never was a little book so interesting! never was such a laying open of characters, events, and circumstances, mutually acting on each other!—never were words so pregnant with meaning, or the mightiest events so concisely expressed!—never were political errors so courageously acknowledged, or the deepest crimes so sophistically glossed. It can only proceed from a mind long used to such conclusions. And if it be not by Napoleon, it is from an intellect of similar construction. B. R. H.”

³ The reference is clearly to General Bertrand.

Does conquer him that did his Master conquer,
And earns a place i' the story.

But how differently does Buonaparte bear his fate from Anthony !

'Tis good, too, that the Duke of Wellington has a good Word or so in the Examiner. A Man ought to have the Fame he deserves—and I begin to think that detracting from him as well as from Wordsworth is the same thing. I wish he had a little more taste—and did not in that respect “deal in Lieutenantry.” You should have heard from me before this—but in the first place I did not like to do so before I had got a little way in the First Book, and in the next as G.¹ told me you were going to write I delayed till I had heard from you. Give my Respects the next time you write to the North² and also to John Hunt. Remember me to Reynolds and tell him to write. Ay, and when you send Westward tell your Sister that I mentioned her in this. So now in the name of Shakespeare, Raphael and all our Saints, I commend you to the care of heaven !

Your everlasting friend

John Keats—

XII.

TO MESSRS. TAYLOR AND HESSEY.

Margate,
16 May 1817.

My dear Sirs,

I am extremely indebted to you for your liberality in the shape of manufactured rag, value £20, and shall immediately proceed to destroy some of the minor heads of that hydra the Dun ; to conquer which the knight need have no Sword, Shield, Cuirass, Cuisses, Herbadgeon, Spear, Casque, Greaves, Palldrons, spurs, Chevron, or any other scaly commodity, but he need only take the Bank-note of Faith and Cash of Salvation,

¹ George Keats.

² Probably the respects were for Wordsworth.

XII. Having now started upon ‘Endymion,’ Keats had, as Lord Houghton records, “come to an arrangement with Messrs. Taylor and Hessey (who seem to have cordially appreciated his genius) respecting its publication.” In regard to the “tangible proofs of their interest in his welfare” indicated in the following letters, the biographer observes that Keats’s “reliance on their generosity was probably, only equal to his trust in his own abundant powers of repayment. The physical symptoms he alludes to had nothing dangerous about them and merely suggested some prudence in his mental labours. Nor had he then experienced the harsh repulse of ungenial criticism, but, although never unconscious of his own deficiencies, nor blind to the jealousies and spites of others, still believed himself to be accompanied on his path to fame by the sympathies and congratulations of all the fellow-men he cared for: and they were many.” I do not know whether there is any old authority for spelling ‘habergeon’ as it is spelt at the beginning of this letter.

and set out against the monster, invoking the aid of no Archimago or Urganda, but finger me the paper, light as the Sybil's leaves in Virgil, whereat the fiend skulks off with his tail between his legs. Touch him with this enchanted paper, and he whips you his head away as fast as a snail's horn—but then the horrid propensity he has to put it up again has discouraged many very valiant Knights. He is such a never-ending still-beginning sort of a body, like my landlady of the Bell. I should conjecture that the very spright that "the green sour ringlets makes Whereof the ewe not bites"¹ had manufactured it of the dew fallen on said sour ringlets. I think I could make a nice little allegorical poem, called "The Dun," where we would have the Castle of Carelessness, the Drawbridge of Credit, Sir Novelty Fashion's expedition against the City of Tailors, &c., &c. I went day by day at my poem for a Month—at the end of which time the other day I found my Brain so over-wrought that I had neither rhyme nor reason in it—so was obliged to give up for a few days. I hope soon to be able to resume my work—I have endeavoured to do so once or twice; but to no purpose. Instead of Poetry, I have a swimming in my head and feel all the effects of a Mental debauch, lowness of Spirits, anxiety to go on without the power to do so, which does not at all tend to my ultimate progression. However to-morrow I will begin my next month. This evening I go to Canterbury, having got tired of Margate. I was not right in my head when I came. At Canterbury I hope the remembrance of Chaucer will set me forward like a Billiard Ball. I am glad to hear of Mr. T.'s health, and of the welfare of the "In-town-stayers," and think Reynolds will like his Trip—I have some idea of seeing the Continent some time this summer. In repeating how sensible I am of your kindness, I remain

Your obed^t serv^t and friend,

John Keats.

I shall be happy to hear any little intelligence in the literary or friendly way when you have time to scribble.

XIII.

To MESSRS. TAYLOR AND HESSEY.

10 July 1817.

My Dear Sirs,

I must endeavour to lose my maidenhead with respect to money Matters as soon as possible—and I will too—so, here goes! A couple of Duns that I thought would be silent till the beginning, at least, of next month (when I am certain to be on my legs, for certain sure), have opened upon me with a cry most

¹ See 'The Tempest,' Act V, Scene i.

"untunable;" never did you hear such *un*-"gallant chiding." Now you must know, I am not desolate, but have, thank God, 25 good notes in my fob. But then, you know, I laid them by to write with and would stand at bay a fortnight ere they should grab me. In a month's time I must pay, but it would relieve my mind if I owed you, instead of these Pelican durs.

I am afraid you will say I have "wound about with circumstance," when I should have asked plainly—however as I said I am a little maidenish or so, and I feel my virginity come strong upon me, the while I request the loan of a £20 and a £10, which, if you would enclose to me, I would acknowledge and save myself a hot forehead. I am sure you are confident of my responsibility, and in the sense of squareness that is always in me.

Your obliged friend
John Keats

XIV.

TO JANE AND MARIANE REYNOLDS.

Oxf.—[ord, 5 Sept. 1817.]

My dear Friends,

You are I am glad to hear comfortable at Hampton, where I hope you will receive the Biscuits we ate the other night at Little Britain. I hope you found them good. There you are among Sands, stones, Pebbles, Beeches, Cliffs, Rocks, Deeps, Shallows, weeds, Ships Boats (at a distance), Carrots, Turnips, sun, moon, and stars and all those sort of things—here am I among Colleges, halls, Stalls, Plenty of Trees, thank God—Plenty of water, thank heaven—Plenty of Books, thank the Muses—Plenty of Snuff, thank Sir Walter Raleigh—Plenty of segars,—Ditto—Plenty of Flat country, thank Tellus's rolling pin—I'm on the sofa—Buonaparte is on the snuff-box—But you are by the sea side—argal, you bathe—you walk—you say "how beautiful"—find out resemblances between waves and camels—rocks and dancing masters—fireshovels and telescopes—Dolphins and Madonas—which word, by the way, I must acquaint you was derived from the Syriac, and came down in a way which neither of you I am sorry to say are at all capable of comprehending—but as a time may come when by your occasional converse with me you may arrive at "something like prophetic Strain," I will unbar the gates of my pride and let my condescension stalk forth like a Ghost at a Circus.—The word Madon-a, my dear Ladies—or—the word Mad-o-na—so I say! I

XIV. When Keats wrote this letter to the sisters of his friend Reynolds, he was staying at Oxford with Bailey, who was supposed to have a tenderness for Mariane, and the young ladies were staying at Littlehampton.

am not mad.—Howsumever when that aged Tamer Kewthon sold a certain camel called Peter to the overseer of the Babel Sky works, he thus spake, adjusting his cravat round the tip of his chin—"My dear Ten-story-up-in-air! this here Beast, though I say it as shouldn't say't, not only has the power of subsisting 40 days and 40 nights without fire and candle but he can sing—Here I have in my Pocket a Certificate from Signor Nicolini of the King's Theatre; a Certificate to this effect + + + + + "I have had dinner since I left that effect upon you, and feel too heavy in mentibus to display all the Profoundity of the Polygon—so you had better each of you take a glass of cherry Brandy and drink to the health of Archimedes, who was of so benign a disposition that he never would leave Syracuse in his life—so kept himself out of all Knight Errantry.—This I know to be a fact; for it is written in the 45th book of Winkine's treatise on garden-rollers, that he trod on a fishwoman's toe in Liverpool, and never begged her pardon. Now the long and short is this—that is by comparison—for a long day may be a short year—a long Pole may be a very stupid fellow as a man. But let us refresh ourself from this depth of thinking, and turn to some innocent jocularly—the Bow cannot always be bent—nor the gun always loaded, if you ever let it off—and the life of man is like a great Mountain—his breath is like a Shrewsbury cake—he comes into the world like a shoeblack, and goes out of it like a cobbler—he eats like a chimney sweeper, drinks like a Gingerbread baker—and breathes like Achilles—so it being that we are such sublunary creatures, let us endeavour to correct all our bad spelling—all our most delightful abominations, and let us wish health to Marian and Jane, whoever they be and wherever—

your's truly
John Keats.

XV.

To FANNY KEATS.

Miss Kaley's School, Walthamstow, Essex.

Oxford, Sept. 10th [1817].

My dear Fanny,

Let us now begin a regular question and answer—a little pro and con; letting it interfere as a pleasant method of my coming at your favourite little wants and enjoyments, that I may meet them in a way befitting a brother.

We have been so little together since you have been able to reflect on things that I know not whether you prefer the History of King Pepin to Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress—or Cinderella and her glass slipper to Moor's Almanack. However in a few Letters I hope I shall be able to come at that and adapt

my scribblings to your Pleasure. You must tell me about all you read if it be only six Pages in a Week and this transmitted to me every now and then will procure you full sheets of Writing from me pretty frequently.—This I feel as a necessity for we ought to become intimately acquainted, in order that I may not only, as you grow up love you as my only Sister, but confide in you as my dearest friend. When I saw you last I told you of my intention of going to Oxford and 'tis now a Week since I disembark'd from his Whipship's Coach the Defiance in this place. I am living in Magdalen Hall on a visit to a young Man with whom I have not been long acquainted, but whom I like very much—we lead very industrious lives—he in general Studies and I in proceeding at a pretty good rate with a Poem which I hope you will see early in the next year.—Perhaps you might like to know what I am writing about. I will tell you. Many Years ago there was a young handsome Shepherd who fed his flocks on a Mountain's Side called Latmus—he was a very contemplative sort of a Person and lived solitary among the trees and Plains little thinking that such a beautiful Creature as the Moon was growing mad in Love with him.—However so it was; and when he was asleep on the Grass she used to come down from heaven and admire him excessively for a long time; and at last could not refrain from carrying him away in her arms to the top of that high Mountain Latmus while he was a dreaming—but I dare say [you] have read this and all the other beautiful Tales which have come down from the ancient times of that beautiful Greece. If you have not let me know and I will tell you more at large of others quite as delightful. This Oxford I have no doubt is the finest City in the world—it is full of old Gothic buildings—Spires—towers—Quadrangles—Cloisters—Groves &c. and is surrounded with more clear streams than ever I saw together. I take a Walk by the Side of one of them every Evening and, thank God, we have not had a drop of rain these many days. I had a long and interesting Letter from George, cross lines by a short one from Tom yesterday dated Paris. They both send their loves to you. Like most Englishmen they feel a mighty preference for everything English—the French Meadows, the trees, the People, the Towns, the Churches, the Books, the every thing—although they may be in themselves good: yet when put in comparison with our green Island they all vanish like Swallows in October. They have seen Cathedrals, Manuscripts, Fountains, Pictures, Tragedy, Comedy,—with other things you may by chance meet with in this Country such a[s] Washerwomen, Lamplighters, Turnpike-men, Fishkettles, Dancing Masters, Kettle drums, Sentry Boxes, Rocking Horses &c.—and, now they have taken them over a set of boxing gloves. I have written to George and requested him,

as you wish I should, to write to you. I have been writing very hard lately, even till an utter incapacity came on, and I feel it now about my head: so you must not mind a little out of the way sayings—though by the bye were my brain as clear as a bell I think I should have a little propensity thereto. I shall stop here till I have finished the 3rd Book of my Story; which I hope will be accomplish'd in at most three Weeks from to day—about which time you shall see me. How do you like Miss Taylor's essays in Rhyme¹—I just look'd into the Book and it appeared to me suitable to you—especially since I remember your liking for those pleasant little things the Original Poems—the essays are the more mature production of the same hand. While I was speaking about France it occurred to me to speak a few Words on their Language—it is perhaps the poorest one ever spoken since the jabbering in the Tower of Babel, and when you come to know that the real use and greatness of a Tongue is to be referred to its Literature—you will be astonished to find how very inferior it is to our native Speech.—I wish the Italian would supersede French in every school throughout the Country, for that is full of real Poetry and Romance of a kind more fitted for the Pleasure of Ladies than perhaps our own.—It seems that the only end to be gained in acquiring French is the immense accomplishment of speaking it—it is none at all—a most lamentable mistake indeed. Italian indeed would sound most musically from Lips which had began to pronounce it as early as French is crammed down our Mouths, as if we were young Jackdaws at the mercy of an overfeeding Schoolboy. Now Fanny you must write soon—and write all you think about, never mind what—only let me have a good deal of your writing—You need not do it all at once—be two or three or four day[s] about it, and let it be a diary of your little Life. You will preserve all my Letters and I will secure yours—and thus in the course of time we shall each of us have a good Bundle—which, hereafter, when things may have strangely altered and god knows what happened, we may read over together and look with pleasure on times past—that now are to come. Give my Respects to the Ladies—and so my dear Fanny I am ever

Your most affectionate Brother

John

If you direct—Post Office, Oxford—your Letter will be brought to me.—

¹The books referred to, once very popular but now practically forgotten, are 'Original Poems for Infant Minds' (1807) and 'Essays in Rhyme on Morals and Manners' (1816), both produced conjointly by Jane and Ann Taylor, sisters of Isaac Taylor.

XVI.

To JANE REYNOLDS.

Oxford, Sunday Evening

[14 September 1817.]

My dear Jane

You are such a literal translator, that I shall some day amuse myself with looking over some foreign sentences, and imagining how you would render them into English. This is an age for typical Curiosities; and I would advise you, as a good speculation, to study Hebrew, and astonish the world with a figurative version in our native tongue. The Mountains skipping like rams, and the little hills like lambs, you will leave as far behind as the hare did the tortoise. It must be so or you would never have thought that I really meant you would like to pro and con about those Honeycombs—no, I had no such idea, or, if I had, 'twould be only to tease you a little for love. So now let us put down in black and white briefly my sentiments thereon.—Imprimis—I sincerely believe that Imogen is the finest creature, and that I should have been disappointed at hearing you prefer Juliet—Item—yet I feel such a yearning towards Juliet that I would rather follow her into Pandemonium than Imogen into Paradise—heartily wishing myself a Romeo to be worthy of her, and to hear the Devils quote the old proverb “Birds of a feather flock together.” Amen.—

Now let us turn to the sea-shore. Believe me, my dear Jane, it is a great happiness to see that you are, in this finest part of the year, winning a little enjoyment from the hard world. In truth, the great Elements we know of, are no mean comforters: the open sky sits upon our senses like a sapphire crown—the Air is our robe of state—the Earth is our throne and the Sea a mighty minstrel playing before it—able, like David's harp, to make such a one as you forget almost the tempest cares of life. I have found in the ocean's music,—varying (tho' self-same) more than the passion of Timotheus, an enjoyment not to be put into words; and, “though inland far I be,” I now hear the

XVI. Of Keats's habits while staying at Oxford Bailey gave the following account, quoted by Lord Houghton :—“He wrote and I read—sometimes at the same table, sometimes at separate desks—from breakfast till two or three o'clock. He sat down to his task, which was about fifty lines a day, with his paper before him, and wrote with as much regularity and apparently with as much ease as he wrote his letters. Indeed, he quite acted up to the principle he lays down, ‘that if Poetry comes not as naturally as the leaves of a tree, it had better not come at all.’ Sometimes he fell short of his allotted task, but not often, and he would make it up another day. But he never forced himself. When he had finished his writing for the day, he usually read it over to me, and then read or wrote letters till we went out for a walk.”

voice most audibly while pleasing myself in the idea of your sensations.

———¹ is getting well apace, and if you have a few trees, and a little harvesting about you, I'll snap my fingers in Lucifer's eye. I hope you bathe too—if you do not, I earnestly recommend it. Bathe thrice a week, and let us have no more sitting up next winter. Which is the best of Shakespeare's plays? I mean in what mood and with what accompaniment do you like the sea best? It is very fine in the morning, when the sun,

“Opening on Neptune with fair blessed beams,
Turns into yellow gold his salt sea streams ;”²

and superb when

“The sun from meridian height
Illumines the depth of the sea,
And the fishes, beginning to sweat,
Cry d—— it ! how hot we shall be,”

and gorgeous, when the fair planet hastens

“To his home
Within the Western foam.”

But don't you think there is something extremely fine after sunset, when there are a few white clouds about and a few stars blinking—when the waters are ebbing, and the horizon a mystery? This state of things has been so fulfilling to me that I am anxious to hear whether it is a favourite with you. So when you and Marianne club your letter to me put in a word or two about it. Tell Dilke that it would be perhaps as well if he left a Pheasant or Partridge alive here and there to keep up a supply of game for next season—tell him to rein in if Possible all the Nimrod of his disposition, he being a mighty hunter before the Lord—of the Manor. Tell him to shoot fair, and not to have at the Poor devils in a furrow—when they are flying, he may fire, and nobody will be the wiser.

Give my sincerest respects to Mrs. Dilke, saying that I have not forgiven myself for not having got her the little box of medicine I promised, and that, had I remained at Hampstead, I would have made precious havoc with her house and furniture—drawn a great harrow over her garden—poisoned Boxer—eaten her clothes-pegs—fried her cabbages—fricaseed (how is it spelt?) her radishes—ragouted her onions—belaboured her *beat-root*—outstripped her scarlet-runners—*parlezvous'd* with her french-beans—devoured her mignon or mignonette—metamorphosed her bell-handles—splintered her looking-glasses—

¹ There does not appear to be any clue to the omitted name.

² ‘A Midsummer Night's Dream,’ Act III, Scene ii.

bullocked at her cups and saucers—agonized her decanters—put old Phillips¹ to pickle in the brine-tub—disorganized her piano—dislocated her candlesticks—emptied her wine-bins in a fit of despair—turned out her maid to grass—and astonished B[rown]; whose letter to her on these events I would rather see than the original Copy of the Book of Genesis. Should you see Mr. W. D[ilke] remember me to him, and to little Robinson Crusoe,² and to Mr. Snook.

Poor Bailey, scarcely ever well, has gone to bed, pleased that I am writing to you. To your brother John (whom henceforth I shall consider as mine) and to you, my dear friends, Marianne and Jane, I shall ever feel grateful for having made known to me so real a fellow as Bailey. He delights me in the selfish and (please God) the disinterested part of my disposition. If the old Poets have any pleasure in looking down at the enjoyers of their works, their eyes must bend with a double satisfaction upon him. I sit as at a feast when he is over them, and pray that if, after my death, any of my labours should be worth saving, they may have so “honest a chronicler” as Bailey. Out of this, his enthusiasm in his own pursuit and for all good things is of an exalted kind—worthy a more healthful frame and an untorn spirit. He must have happy years to come—“he shall not die, by God.”

A letter from John the other day was a chief happiness to me. I made a little mistake when, just now, I talked of being far inland. How can that be when Endymion and I are at the bottom of the sea?³ whence I hope to bring him in safety before you leave the sea-side; and, if I can so contrive it, you shall be greeted by him upon the sea-sands, and he shall tell you all his adventures, which having finished, he shall thus proceed—“My dear Ladies, favourites of my gentle mistress, however my friend Keats may have teased and vexed you, believe me he loves you not the less—for instance, I am deep in his favour, and yet he has been hauling me through the earth and sea with unrelenting perseverance. I know for all this that he is mighty fond of me, by his contriving me all sorts of pleasures. Nor is this the least, fair ladies, this one of meeting you on the desert shore, and greeting you in his name. He sends you moreover this little scroll.” My dear girls, I send you, per favour of Endymion, the assurance of my esteem for you, and my utmost wishes for your health and pleasure, being ever,

Your affectionate brother,
John Keats.

¹ The gardener.

² I have not come upon anything showing to whom this name was applied.

³ See the last line of the second Book of ‘Endymion’ and the whole of the third Book.

XVII.

TO JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS.

Oxford,
Sunday Morning [21 September 1817].

My dear Reynolds,

So you are determined to be my mortal foe—draw a Sword at me, and I will forgive—put a Bullet in my Brain, and I will shake it out as a dew-drop from the Lion's Mane—put me on a Gridiron and I will fry with great complacency—but—oh, horror! to come upon me in the shape of a Dun!—send me bills! As I say to my Tailor, send me Bills and I'll never employ you more. However, needs must, when the devil drives: and for fear of "before and behind Mr. Honeycomb" I'll proceed. I have not time to elucidate the forms and shapes of the grass and trees; for, rot it! I forgot to bring my mathematical case with me, which unfortunately contained my triangular Prism so that the hues of the grass cannot be dissected for you.

For these last five or six days, we have had regularly a Boat on the Isis, and explored all the streams about, which are more in number than your eye-lashes. We sometimes skim into a Bed of rushes, and there become naturalized river-folks,—there is one particularly nice nest, which we have christened "Reynolds's Cove," in which we have read Wordsworth, and talked as may be. I think I see you and Hunt meeting in the Pit.—What a very pleasant fellow he is, if he would give up the sovereignty of a room pro bono. What evenings we might pass with him, could we have him from Mrs. H. Failings I am always rather rejoiced to find in a man than sorry for; they bring us to a Level. He has them, but then his makes-up are very good. He agrees with the Northern Poet in this, "He is not one of those who much delight to season their fireside with personal talk." I must confess, however, having a little itch that way, and at this present moment I have a few neighbourly remarks to make. The world, and especially our England, has, within the last thirty years, been vexed and teased by a set of devils, whom I detest so much that I almost hunger after an Acherontic promotion to a Torturer, purposely for their accommodation. These devils are a set of women, who having taken a snack or luncheon of Literary scraps, set themselves up for towers of Babel in languages, Sapphos in Poetry, Euclids in Geometry, and everything in nothing. The thing has made a very uncomfortable impression on me. I had longed for some real feminine Modesty in these things, and was therefore gladdened in the extreme on opening the other day one of Bailey's books—a book of poetry written by one beautiful Mrs. Philips, a friend of

Jeremy Taylor's, and called "The Matchless Orinda."¹ You must have heard of her, and most likely read her Poetry—I wish you have not, that I may have the pleasure of treating you with a few stanzas—I do it at a venture. You will not regret reading them once more. The following, to her friend Mrs. M. A. at parting, you will judge of.

I have examin'd and do find,
Of all that favour me
There's none I grieve to leave behind
But only, only thee.
To part with thee I needs must die,
Could parting sep'rate thee and I.

But neither Chance nor Complement
Did element our Love ;
'Twas sacred sympathy was lent
Us from the Quire above.
That Friendship Fortune did create,
Still fears a wound from Time or Fate.

Our chang'd and mingled Souls are grown
To such acquaintance now,
That if each would resume their own,
Alas ! we know not how.
We have each other so engrost,
That each is in the Union lost.

And thus we can no Absence know,
Nor shall we be confin'd ;

¹ This poem appears to have been addressed by Katherine Philips to her friend Mary Awbrey, known in their literary set as Rosania, before that friend's secret marriage to Mr. Montague,—or at least before it was known. Jeremy Taylor was known in the same set as Palæmon, and had addressed to Orinda his Discourse on the Nature, Offices, and Measures of Friendship, with Rules for conducting it. Orinda was the daughter of John Fowles, a merchant, of Bucklersbury. She was born in 1631 and died of small-pox in 1664. Her husband was James Philips of the Priory, Cardigan. After seven years of childless married life, she bore him a boy, Hector, who died within six weeks. Mother and son were both buried at St. Syth's Church. I presume Bailey's copy of "the matchless Orinda's" works was the folio of 1667 or that of 1669, with which I have collated the poem as given in Keats's letter and have found no variations of consequence. Had he copied from the pirated octavo of 1664, he would doubtless have given Mary Awbrey's nickname as Rosannia, the pirate having done so. Perhaps the portrait engraved by Faithorne was missing as it frequently is from the folios: I do not think Keats would have called her beautiful with that before him, though it has both force and dignity. Cowley was among those who admired Orinda living and bewailed her in a Pindarick when dead. Thomas Flatman and the Earls of Orrery and Roscommon were also among those who expressed in verse their admiration for her attainments; and Dryden alluded to her more than once. She was certainly thoughtful and accomplished, as well as sensible and high-principled. Her verse lacks lyric quality rather than substance; but much of it is at least pleasing.

Our active Souls will daily go
 To learn each others mind.
 Nay, should we never meet to Sense,
 Our Souls would hold Intelligence.

Inspired with a Flame Divine
 I scorn to court a stay ;
 For from that noble Soul of thine
 I ne're can be away.
 But I shall weep when thou dost grieve ;
 Nor can I die whil'st thou dost live.

By my own temper I shall guess
 At thy felicity,
 And only like my happiness
 Because it pleaseth thee.
 Our hearts at any time will tell
 If thou, or I, be sick, or well.

All Honour sure I must pretend,
 All that is good or great ;
 She that would be *Rosania's* Friend,
 Must be at least compleat.
 If I have any bravery,
 'Tis cause I have so much of thee.

A compleat
 friend — this
 line sounded
 very oddly to
 me at first.

Thy Leiger Soul in me shall lie,
 And all thy thoughts reveal ;
 Then back again with mine shall flie,
 And thence to me shall steal.
 Thus still to one another tend ;
 Such is the sacred name of *Friend*.

Thus our twin-Souls in one shall grow,
 And teach the World new Love,
 Redeem the Age and Sex, and shew
 A Flame Fate dares not move :
 And courting Death to be our friend,
 Our Lives together too shall end.

A Dew shall dwell upon our Tomb
 Of such a quality,
 That fighting Armies, thither come,
 Shall reconciled be.
 We'll ask no Epitaph, but say
ORINDA and *ROSANIA*.

In other of her poems there is a most delicate fancy of the
 Fletcher kind—which we will con over together.

So Haydon is in Town. I had a letter from him yesterday. We will contrive as the winter comes on—but that is neither here nor there. Have you heard from Rice? Has Martin¹ met with the Cumberland Beggar, or been wondering at the old Leech-gatherer? Has he a turn for fossils? that is, is he capable of sinking up to his Middle in a Morass? How is Hazlitt? We were reading his Table² last night. I know he thinks himself not estimated by ten people in the world—I wish he knew he is. I am getting on famous with my third Book—have written 800 lines thereof, and hope to finish it next Week. Bailey likes what I have done very much.³ Believe me, my dear Reynolds, one of my chief layings-up is the pleasure I shall have in showing it to you, I may now say, in a few days.

I have heard twice from my Brothers; they are going on very well, and send their Remembrances to you. We expected to have had notices from little-Hampton this morning—we must wait till Tuesday. I am glad of their days with the Dilkes. You are, I know, very much teased in that precious London, and want all the rest possible; so shall be contented with as brief a scrawl—a Word or two, till there comes a pat hour.

Send us a few of your stanzas to read in “Reynolds’s Cove.” Give my Love and respects to your Mother and remember me kindly to all at home.

Yours faithfully
John Keats

I have left the doublings⁴ for Bailey, who is going to say that he will write to you to-morrow.

¹ The gentleman referred to was John Martin of the firm of Rodwell and Martin—publishers and booksellers of Holles Street, Cavendish Square. Martin was friendly with Reynolds, Rice, and Bailey, as well as with Keats, and was a constant visitor at Little Britain, where he was well thought of. Though something of an epicure and not considered an intellectual man, he relished the brilliant society of the circle of friends as well as the material good things his weakness for which was a frequent topic of friendly “chaff.” Born on the 16th of September 1791, he retired early from business (1826), did much bibliographical work, became librarian at Woburn Abbey (1836), and F.S.A., and died on the 30th of December 1855.

² ‘The Round Table.’

³ Bailey’s encouragement no doubt speeded the poet in the production of ‘Endymion.’ The reference to “little-Hampton” is of course to Reynolds’s sisters Jane and Mariane. (See foot-note at page 24 *ante*.) Mr. Dilke records that the young ladies “came over and stayed a few days with us at my sister’s [Mrs. Snook’s] at Bedhampton.”

⁴ In the days when envelopes were a kind of stationery unknown, and letters were written and folded in such a way that a part of the sheet itself—of the last page, that is—formed the address side of the letter, the seal or wafer being placed on the other side so as to secure the “tuck,” the portions of the fourth page which thus became hidden were called the doublings; and to leave these blank demanded excuse as between intimates. The term “doublings” has gone out with the general disuse of the “tuck” and seal system in favour of separate adhesive envelopes.

XVIII.

To JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS.

[Oxford, September 1817.]

.... Wordsworth sometimes, though in a fine way, gives us sentences in the style of school exercises.—For instance,

The lake doth glitter,
Small birds twitter &c.

Now, I think this is an excellent method of giving a very clear description of an interesting place such as Oxford is.

The Gothic looks solemn,
The plain Doric column
Supports an old Bishop and Crosier ;
The mouldering arch,
Shaded o'er by a larch
Lives next door to Wilson the Hosier.
Vicè—that is, by turns,—
O'er pale visages mourns
The black tassell trencher or common hat ;
The Chantry boy sings,
The Steeple-bell rings,
And as for the Chancellor—*dominat*.
There are plenty of trees,
And plenty of ease,
And plenty of fat deer for Parsons ;
And when it is venison,
Short is the benison,—
Then each on a leg or thigh fastens....

XVIII. The particular poem alluded to, 'Written in March while resting on the Bridge at the Foot of Brother's Water,' was published in 1807: in Volume II (pages 9 and 10) of the 1815 collection in two volumes it reappeared thus:

The cock is crowing,
The stream is flowing,
The small birds twitter,
The lake doth glitter,
The green field sleeps in the sun ;
The oldest and youngest
Are at work with the strongest ;
The cattle are grazing,
Their heads never raising ;
There are forty feeding like one !
Like an army defeated
The Snow hath retreated,
And now doth fare ill
On the top of the bare hill ;
The Plough-boy is whooping—anon—anon ;
There's joy in the mountains ;
There's life in the fountains ;
Small clouds are sailing,

XIX.

To BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON.

My dear Haydon,

Oxford, 28 September [1817].

I read your letter to the young Man, whose name is Crip[p]s. He seemed more than ever anxious to avail himself of your offer. I think I told you we asked him to ascertain his Means. He does not possess the Philosopher's stone—nor Fortunatus' purse, nor Gyges' ring—but at Bailey's suggestion, whom I assure you is a very capital fellow, we have stummed¹ up a kind of contrivance whereby he will be enabled to do himself the benefits you will lay in his Path. I have a great Idea that he will be a tolerable neat brush. 'Tis perhaps the finest thing that will befall him this many a year: for he is just of an age to get grounded in bad habits from which you will pluck him. He brought a copy of Mary Queen of Scots: it appears to me that he has copied the bad style of the painting, as well as coloured the eyeball[1]s yellow like the original. He has also the fault that you pointed out to me in Hazlitt on the constringing and diffusing of substance.² However I really believe that he will take fire at the sight of your Picture—and set about things. If he can get ready in time to return to town with me, which will be in a few days—I will bring him to you. You will be glad to hear that within these last three weeks I have written 1000 lines—which are the third Book of my Poem. My Ideas with respect to it I assure you are very low—and I would write the

Blue sky prevailing;
The rain is over and gone!

Keats's criticism in this fragment is better than his parody,—though the rhyme 'common-hat' and 'dominat,' bad enough in itself, has a certain aptness under the provocation of 'fare ill' and 'bare hill.'

XIX. The reference with which this letter opens is explained by a letter from Haydon given in Volume II of the 'Correspondence,' dated September 17, 1817: the painter says to the poet—"I am delighted to hear that you are getting on with your poem. Success to it and to you, with all my heart and soul. Will you oblige me by going to Magdalen College and inquiring of the porter there about a young man who, when I was lately at Oxford, was copying the altar-piece at Magdalen by Morales. I am anxious to know about that young man—the copy promised something. Will you, if you can, see the young man, and ascertain what his wishes in Art are? if he has ambition and seems to possess power? all of which you can soon discover. In these cases should any friend be disposed to assist him up to London and to support him for a year, I will train him in the Art with no further remuneration than the pleasure of seeing him advance. I will put him in the right way, and do all I can to advance him. Do oblige me by exerting yourself in this case for me. Perhaps Mr. Bailey may also feel interest. Remember me to him."

¹ This word is certainly *stummed* in the original letter; and I think *stummed*, in the sense of *strengthened*, is more probably what Keats meant to write than either *strummed* or *stumped*.

² Hazlitt as a painter is best known by his portrait of Lamb in the National Portrait Gallery.

subject thoroughly again—but I am tired of it and think the time would be better spent in writing a new Romance which I have in my eye for next summer—Rome was not built in a Day—and all the good I expect from my employment this summer is the fruit of Experience which I hope to gather in my next Poem. Bailey's kindest wishes and my vow of being

Yours eternally
John Keats—

XX.

TO BENJAMIN BAILEY.

My dear Bailey, Hampstead, Oct^r [8, 1817] Wednesday.

After a tolerable journey I went from coach to Coach as far as Hampstead where I found my Brothers—the next Morning finding myself tolerably well I went to Lambs Conduit Street and delivered your parcel—Jane and Marianne were greatly improved, Marianne especially, she has no unhealthy plumpness in the face—but she comes me healthy and angular to the chin.—I did not see John—I was extremely sorry to hear that poor Rice, after having had capital health during his tour, was very ill. I dare say you have heard from him. From No. 19 I went to Hunt's and Haydon's who live now neighbours—Shelley was there—I know nothing about anything in this part of the world—every Body seems at Loggerheads. There's Hunt infatuated—there's Haydon's picture in statu quo—There's Hunt walks up and down his painting room—criticising every head most unmercifully. There's Horace Smith tired of Hunt. "The web of our life is of mingled yarn."¹ Haydon having removed entirely from Marlborough Street, Cripps must direct his letter to Lisson Grove, North Paddington. Yesterday Morning while I was at Brown's, in came Reynolds, he was pretty bobbish, we had a pleasant day—he would walk home at night that cursed cold distance. Mrs. Bentley's children² are making a horrid row—whereby I regret I cannot be transported to your Room to write to you. I am quite disgusted with literary men and will never know another except Wordsworth—no not even Byron. Here is an instance of the friendship of such. Haydon and Hunt have known each other many years—now they live, pour ainsi dire, jealous neighbours—Haydon says to me, Keats, don't show your lines to Hunt on any Account or he will have done half for you—so it appears Hunt wishes it to be thought. When he met Reynolds in the Theatre, John told him that I was getting on to the completion of 4000 lines—Ah!

¹ See 'All's Well that Ends Well,' Act IV, Scene iii.

² The children of Bentley the postman, at whose house in Well Walk the Keats brothers were lodging, were something of a trial to the poet.

says Hunt, had it not been for me they would have been 7000 ! If he will say this to Reynolds, what would he to other people? Haydon received a Letter a little while back on this subject from some Lady—which contains a caution to me, thro' him, on the subject—now is not all this a most paultry thing to think about? You may see the whole of the case by the following Extract from a Letter I wrote to George in the Spring—"As to what you say about my being a Poet, I can return no Answer but by saying that the high Idea I have of poetical fame makes me think I see it towering too high above me. At any rate, I have no right to talk until *Endymion* is finished, it will be a test, a trial of my Powers of Imagination, and chiefly of my invention which is a rare thing indeed—by which I must make 4000 lines of one bare circumstance, and fill them with poetry—and when I consider that this is a great task, and that when done it will take me but a dozen paces towards the temple of fame—it makes me say—God forbid that I should be without such a task ! I have heard Hunt say, and I may be asked—*why endeavour after a long Poem?* To which I should answer, Do not the Lovers of Poetry like to have a little Region to wander in, where they may pick and choose, and in which the images are so numerous that many are forgotten and found new in a second Reading : which may be food for a Week's stroll in the Summer? Do not they like this better than what they can read through before Mrs. Williams comes down stairs? a Morning work at most.

"Besides, a long poem is a test of invention, which I take to be the Polar Star of Poetry, as Fancy is the Sails—and Imagination the rudder.—Did our great Poets ever write Short Pieces? I mean in the shape of Tales. This same invention seems indeed of late years to have been forgotten as a Poetical excellence—But enough of this, I put on no Laurels till I shall have finished *Endymion*, and I hope Apollo is not angered at my having made a Mockery at Hunt's—"

You see Bailey how independent my Writing has been. Hunt's dissuasion was of no avail—I refused to visit Shelley that I might have my own unfettered scope ;—and after all, I shall have the Reputation of Hunt's élève. His corrections and amputations will by the knowing ones be traced in the Poem. This is, to be sure, the vexation of a day—nor would I say so many words about it to any but those whom I know to have my welfare and reputation at heart. Haydon promised to give directions for those Casts, and you may expect to see them soon, with as many Letters—You will soon hear the dinning of Bells—never mind ! you and Gleig will defy the foul fiend—But do not sacrifice your health to Books : do take it kindly and not so voraciously. I am certain if you are your own Physician, your Stomach will resume its proper strength and then what great

benefits will follow.—My sister wrote a Letter to me, which I think must be at the post-office—Ax Will to see. My Brother's kindest remembrances to you—we are going to dine at Brown's where I have some hopes of meeting Reynolds. The little Mercury I have taken has corrected the poison and improved my health—tho' I feel from my employment that I shall never be again secure in Robustness. Would that you were as well as

Your sincere friend and brother,

John Keats—

XXI.

To BENJAMIN BAILEY.

[November 1817.]

My dear Bailey,

So you have got a Curacy—good, but I suppose you will be obliged to stop among your Oxford favourites during Term time. Never mind. When do you preach your first sermon?—tell me, for I shall propose to the two R.'s¹ to hear it,—so don't look into any of the old corner oaken pews, for fear of being put out by us. Poor Johnny Moultrie² can't be there. He is ill, I expect—but that's neither here nor there. All I can say, I wish him as well through it as I am like to be. For this fortnight I have been confined at Hampstead. Saturday evening was my first day in town, when I went to Rice's,—as we intend to do every Saturday till we know not when. We hit upon an old gent we had known some few years ago, and had a *veiry pleasante daye*. In this world there is no quiet,—nothing but teasing and snubbing and vexation. My brother Tom looked very unwell yesterday, and I am for shipping him off to Lisbon. Perhaps I ship there with him. I have not seen Mrs. Reynolds since I left you; wherefore my conscience smites me. I think of seeing her to-morrow; have you any message? I hope Gleig³ came soon after I left. I don't suppose I've written as many lines as you have read volumes, or at least chapters, since I saw you. However, I am in a fair way now to come to a conclusion in at least three weeks, when I assure you I shall be glad to dismount for a month or two; although I'll keep as tight a rein as possible till then, nor suffer myself to sleep. I will copy for you the opening of the Fourth Book, in which you will see from the manner I had not an opportunity of mentioning

¹The "two R.s" would probably be John Hamilton Reynolds and James Rice, possibly Jane and Mariane Reynolds. Bailey was partial to Mariane, and was thought to have misbehaved in transferring his attentions elsewhere.

²John Moultrie, born December 30th, 1799, went to Eton 1811 and to Trinity College, Cambridge, 1819, contributed to 'The Etonian' 1820-21, took holy orders, was the author of 'The Dream of Life' &c. (1843), 'Altars, Hearths, and Graves' (1854), and other works, and died 1874.

³The late Rev. George Robert Gleig, author of 'The Subaltern,' and many other well-known works, and sometime Chaplain General of the Forces.

any poets, for fear of spoiling the effect of the passage by particularizing them.

Thus far had I written when I received your last, which made me at the sight of the direction caper for despair; but for one thing I am glad that I have been neglectful, and that is, therefore I have received a proof of your utmost kindness, which at this present I feel very much, and I wish I had a heart always open to such sensations; but there is no altering a man's nature, and mine must be radically wrong, for it will lie dormant a whole month. This leads me to suppose that there are no men thoroughly wicked, so as never to be self-spiritualized into a kind of sublime misery; but, alas! 'tis but for an hour. He is the only Man "who has kept watch on man's mortality," who has philanthropy enough to overcome the disposition to an indolent enjoyment of intellect, who is brave enough to volunteer for uncomfortable hours. You remember in Hazlitt's essay on commonplace people he says, "they read the *Edinburgh* and *Quarterly*, and think as they do." Now, with respect to Wordsworth's "Gipsy," I think he is right, and yet I think Hazlitt is right, and yet I think Wordsworth is rightest. If Wordsworth had not been idle, he had not been without his task; nor had the "Gipsies"—they in the visible world had been as picturesque an object as he in the invisible. The smoke of their fire, their attitudes, their voices, were all in harmony with the evenings. It is a bold thing to say—and I would not say it in print—but it seems to me that if Wordsworth had thought a little deeper at that moment, he would not have written the poem at all. I should judge it to have been written in one of the most comfortable moods of his life—it is a kind of sketchy intellectual landscape, not a search after truth, nor is it fair to attack him on such a subject; for it is with the critic as with the poet; had Hazlitt thought a little deeper, and been in a good temper, he would never have spied out imaginary faults there. The Sunday before last I asked Haydon to dine with me, when I thought of settling all matters with him in regard to Cripps, and let you know about it. Now, although I engaged him a fortnight before, he sent illness as an excuse. He never will come. I have not been well enough to stand the chance of a wet night, and so have not seen him, nor been able to expurgatorize more masks for you; but I will not speak—your speakers are never doers. Then Reynolds,—every time I see him and mention you, he puts his hand to his head and looks like a son of Niobe's; but he'll write soon. Rome, you know, was not built in a day. I shall be able, by a little perseverance, to read your letters off-hand.¹ I am afraid your health will suffer from over study

¹ Bailey wrote a very bad hand. Keats deals with it in letter No. XXIV to Reynolds, and again, very racily, in a letter to Dilke of the 4th of March 1820.

before your examination. I think you might regulate the thing according to your own pleasure,—and I would too. They were talking of your being up at Christmas. Will it be before you have passed? There is nothing, my dear Bailey, I should rejoice at more than to see you comfortable with a little Peona wife; an affectionate wife, I have a sort of confidence, would do you a great happiness. May that be one of the many blessings I wish you. Let me be but the one-tenth of one to you, and I shall think it great. My brother George's kindest wishes to you. My dear Bailey, I am, Your affectionate friend,

John Keats.

I should not like to be pages in your way; when in a tolerable hungry mood you have no mercy. Your teeth are the Rock Tarpeian down which you capsize epic poems like mad. I would not for forty shillings be Coleridge's Lays¹ in your way. I hope you will soon get through this abominable writing in the schools, and be able to keep the terms with more comfort in the hope of retiring to a comfortable and quiet home out of the way of all Hopkinsees and black beetles. When you are settled, I will come and take a peep at your church, your house; try whether I shall have grown too lusty for my chair by the fireside, and take a peep at my earliest bower. A question is the best beacon towards a little speculation. Then ask me after my health and spirits. This question ratifies in my mind what I have said above. Health and spirits can only belong unalloyed to the selfish man—the man who thinks much of his fellows can never be in spirits. You must forgive, although I have only written three hundred lines; they would have been five, but I have been obliged to go to town. Yesterday I called at Lamb's. St. Jane looked very flush when I first looked in, but was much better before I left.

XXII.

TO BENJAMIN BAILEY.

Fragment of an outside sheet.

[Postmark, 5 November, 1817.]

I will speak of something else or my spleen will get higher and higher—and I am a bearer of the two-edged sword.—I hope

¹This expression probably refers to the two 'Lay Sermons,' both then published, one of which was cruelly treated by Hazlitt in 1816, and not to the poetical collection 'Sibylline Leaves,' which, like the second 'Lay Sermon,' had appeared in 1817. The sermons were so much talked about as to need a familiar brevity of title.

XXII. The posting of this letter was probably delayed: it clearly belongs to October 1817, as that is the sole month in which one and only one of the articles on "The Cockney School" had appeared. The late Mr. Dykes Campbell had a copy of Keats's 'Poems' (1817) with an inscription believed to be in Cornelius Webb's writing:—"This Book was given me by John Keats himself when pub-

you will receive an answer from Haydon soon—if not, Pride! Pride! I have received no more subscription—but shall soon have a full health, Liberty and leisure to give a good part of my time to him. I will certainly be in time for him. We have promised him one year: let that have elapsed, then do as we think proper. If I did not know how impossible it is, I should say—"do not at this time of disappointments, disturb yourself about others."

There has been a flaming attack upon Hunt in the *Edinburgh Magazine*. I never read anything so virulent—accusing him of

lished in 1817, he living at the time in lodgings near the Poultry of all places in the world for a descriptive poet!"

Cornelius Webb says in the preface to his *Lyric Leaves* (Griffiths, 1832) that the poems were produced in the years 1817 to 1820, and that some of them were printed in two small tracts for private circulation, while others appeared in periodicals. Mr. Colvin mentions a volume published by the Olliers in 1821, containing, *inter alia*, an Invocation to Sleep. That poem appears in the 'Lyric Leaves' with the date 'Jan. 31, 1817.' This little volume is not by any means without merit or charm; but Webb did not rise in literature. He says in 1832 that after 1820 he was "forced from poetry by discouragements sufficient enough for the time to compel him to abandon his humble muse." He is said to have become a reader in the printing house of Clowes, and revised in that capacity 'The Quarterly Review' as it passed through the press. He published in 1836 'Glances at Life in City and Suburb,' on the title-page of which he is described as "Cornelius Webbe [with an e], author of the 'Posthumous Papers of a Person lately about Town;' 'Lyric Leaves,' etc." In 1838 followed two volumes of Essays entitled 'The Man about Town,' some of which are pleasant enough in a light way, and were reprinted in 1857 under the title of 'The Absent Man.' A second series of 'Glances at Life' appeared in 1848. This was meant to have included a paper which Webb, according to a letter in my possession addressed by him to Messrs. Smith, Elder & Co., had written about Keats; but no such paper is in the volume. His ephemeral books got tolerant reviews in the 'Quarterly.'

It must have been some nine or ten months after writing the letter to Bailey that Keats received in Scotland the invitation referred to by Lord Houghton in the following passage:—"Some mutual friend had forwarded him an invitation from Messrs. Blackwood, injudiciously adding the suggestion, that it would be very advisable for him to visit the Modern Athens, and endeavour to conciliate his literary enemies in that quarter. The sensibility and moral dignity of Keats were outraged by this proposal: it may be imagined what answer he returned, and also that this circumstance may not have been unconnected with the article on him which appeared in the August number of the 'Edinburgh Magazine,' as part of a series that had commenced the previous year, and concerning which he had already expressed himself freely." Lord Houghton gives Brown as his authority concerning the invitation, but adds—"Mr. Robert Blackwood, son of the Mr. Blackwood of that time, thinks the circumstance very improbable, and that Mr. Brown must have been mistaken or misinformed. It does, however, appear that in the July of 1818 Mr. Bailey met, at Bishop Gleig's, in Scotland, a leading contributor to 'Blackwood's Magazine,' with whom he had much conversation respecting Keats, especially about his relations with Leigh Hunt, and Mr. Bailey thought his confidence had been abused." *Somebody's* confidence was certainly abused in the most open and shameless manner; and why not Mr. Bailey's? The magazine at that time teemed with the frowsy and unsavoury personal gibes of which the possession of "Christopher North" gave it a monopoly.

the greatest Crimes, depreciating his Wife, his Poetry, his Habits, his Company, his Conversation. These philippics are to come out in numbers—called “the Cockney School of Poetry.” There has been but one number published—that on Hunt—to which they have prefixed a motto from one Cornelius Webb, Poetaster—who unfortunately was of our party occasionally at Hampstead, and took it into his head to write the following,—something about, “We’ll talk on Wordsworth, Byron, a theme we never tire on;” and so forth till he comes to Hunt and Keats. In the motto they have put Hunt and Keats in large letters—I have no doubt that the second number was intended for me, but have hopes of its non-appearance, from the following Advertisement in last Sunday’s Examiner:—“To Z.—The writer of the article signed Z., in Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine for October 1817 is invited to send his address to the printer of the Examiner, in order that Justice may be Executed on the proper person.” I don’t mind the thing much—but if he should go to such lengths with me as he has done with Hunt, I must infallibly call him to an Account if he be a human being, and appears in Squares and Theatres, where we might “possibly meet”—I don’t relish his abuse.

* * * * *

XXIII.

To CHARLES WENTWORTH DILKE.

[November 1817.]

My dear Dilke,

Mrs. Dilke or Mr. Wm. Dilke, whoever of you shall receive this present, have the kindness to send pr. bearer “Sibylline Leaves,” and your petitioner shall ever pray as in duty bound.

Given under my hand this Wednesday morning of Novr. 1817.

John Keats

Vivant Rex et Regina—amen.

XXIV.

To JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS.

Leatherhead,
22 November 1817.

My dear Reynolds,

There are two things which tease me here—one of them Cripps, and the other that I cannot go with Tom into Devonshire. However, I hope to do my duty to myself in a week or so; and then I’ll try what I can do for my neighbour—now, is not this virtuous? On returning to Town I’ll damn all Idleness

—indeed, in superabundance of employment, I must not be content to run here and there on little two-penny errands, but turn Rakehell, i.e. go a masking, or Bailey will think me just as great a Promise Keeper as *he* thinks you; for myself I do not, and do not remember above one complaint against you—for matter o' that, Bailey writes so abominable a hand, to give his Letter a fair reading requires a little time: so I had not seen, when I saw you last, his invitation to Oxford at Christmas. I'll go with you. You know how poorly Rice was. I do not think it was all corporeal,—bodily pain was not used to keep him silent. I'll tell you what; he was hurt at what your Sisters said about his joking with your Mother, he was, soothly to sain. It will all blow over. God knows, my dear Reynolds, I should not talk any sorrow to you—you must have enough vexations—so I won't any more. If I ever start a rueful subject in a letter to you—blow me! Why don't you?—Now I am going to ask you a very silly Question neither you nor anybody else could answer, under a folio, or at least a Pamphlet—you shall judge—why don't you, as I do, look unconcerned at what may be called more particularly Heart-vexations? They never surprise me—lord! a man should have the fine point of his soul taken off to become fit for this world.

I like this place very much. There is Hill and Dale and a little River. I went up Box hill this Evening after the moon—"you a' seen the Moon"—came down, and wrote some lines. Whenever I am separated from you, and not engaged in a continued Poem, every letter shall bring you a lyric—but I am too anxious for you to enjoy the whole to send you a particle. One of the three books I have with me is Shakspeare's Poems: I never found so many beauties in the Sonnets—they seem to be full of fine things said unintentionally—in the intensity of working out conceits. Is this to be borne? Hark ye!

When lofty trees I see barren of leaves,
Which erst from heat did canopy the head,
And Summer's green all girded up in sheaves,
Borne on the bier with white and bristly head.

He has left nothing to say about nothing or anything: for look at snails—you know what he says about Snails—you know when he talks about "cockled Snails"—well, in one of these sonnets, he says—the chap slips into—no! I lie! this is in the "Venus and Adonis": the simile brought it to my Mind.

As the snail, whose tender horns being hit,
Shrinks back into his shelly cave with pain,
And there all smothered up in shade doth sit,
Long after fearing to put forth again;
So at his bloody view her eyes are fled,
Into the deep dark Cabins of her head.

He overwhelms a genuine Lover of poesy with all manner of abuse, talking about—

“a poet's rage

And stretched metre of an antique song.”

Which, by the bye, will be a capital motto for my poem, won't it? He speaks too of “Time's antique pen”—and “April's first-born flowers”—and “Death's eternal cold.”—By the Whim-King! I'll give you a stanza, because it is not material in connexion, and when I wrote it I wanted you—to give your vote, pro or con.—

Crystalline Brother of the belt of Heaven,
Aquarius! to whom King Jove hath given
Two liquid pulse-streams, 'stead of feather'd wings—
Two fan-like fountains—thine illuminings
For Dian play:
Dissolve the frozen purity of air;
Let thy white shoulders, silvery and bare,
Show cold through wat'ry pinions: make more bright
The Star-Queen's Crescent on her marriage-night:
Haste, haste away!¹

Now I hope I shall not fall off in the winding up, as the woman said to the round [?]¹—I mean up and down. I see there is an advertisement in the “Chronicle” to Poets—he is so overloaded with poems on the “late Princess.”² I suppose you do not lack—send me a few—lend me thy hand to laugh a little—send me a little pullet-sperm, a few finch-eggs—and remember me to each of our card-playing Club. When you die you will all be turned into Dice, and be put in pawn with the devil: for cards, they crumple up like any thing king—I mean John in the stage play what pertains Prince Arthur.

I rest

Your affectionate friend

John Keats

Give my love to both houses—*hinc atque illinc*.

XXV.

To BENJAMIN BAILEY.

[Postmark, Leatherhead, 22 November 1817.]

My dear Bailey,

I will get over the first part of this (*unsaid*) Letter as soon as possible, for it relates to the affairs of poor Cripps.—

¹ See Book IV of ‘Endymion.’

² The Princess Charlotte died on the 6th of November 1817.

XXV. The word in a parenthesis in the first line is ‘*unsaid*’. I had thought it was written inadvertently for ‘*unpaid*’; but I am now disposed to regard it as

To a Man of your nature such a Letter as Haydon's must have been extremely cutting. What occasions the greater part of the world's quarrels? Simply this—two Minds meet, and do not understand each other time enough to prevent any shock or surprise at the conduct of either party. As soon as I had known Haydon three days, I got enough of his Character not to have been surprised at such a Letter as he has hurt you with. Nor, when I knew it, was it a principle with me to drop his acquaintance; although with you it would have been an imperious feeling. I wish you knew all that I think about Genius and the Heart—and yet I think that you are thoroughly acquainted with my innermost breast in that respect, or you could not have known me even thus long, and still hold me worthy to be your dear Friend. In passing, however, I must say one thing that has pressed upon me lately, and increased my Humility and capability of submission—and that is this truth—Men of Genius are great as certain ethereal Chemicals operating on the Mass of neutral intellect—but they have not any individuality, any determined Character—I would call the top and head of those who have a proper self, Men of Power.

But I am running my head into a subject which I am certain I could not do justice to under five Years' study, and 3 vols. octavo—and, moreover, long to be talking about the Imagination—so my dear Bailey, do not think of this unpleasant affair, if possible do not—I defy any harm to come of it—I defy. I shall write to Cripps this week, and request him to tell me all his goings-on from time to time by Letter wherever I may be. It will go on well—so don't because you have suddenly discovered a Coldness in Haydon suffer yourself to be teased—Do not, my dear fellow—O! I wish I was as certain of the end of all your troubles as that of your momentary start about the authenticity of the Imagination. I am certain of nothing but of the holiness of the Heart's affections, and the truth of Imagination. What the Imagination seizes as Beauty must be Truth¹—whether it existed before or not,—for I have the same idea of all our passions as of Love: they are all, in their sublime, creative of essential Beauty. In a Word, you may know my favourite speculation by my first Book, and the little Song I sent in my last,² which is a representation from the fancy of the probable mode of operating in these Matters. The Imagination may be compared to Adam's dream,³—he awoke and found

a mild play upon the lawyerly phrase 'this said letter.' 'This said letter' would be Haydon's to Bailey: 'this *unsaid* letter' Keats's to Bailey.

¹ Compare this with the close of the Ode on a Grecian Urn, Volume II, page 106.

² The letter of which only the outside sheet or a part of it is forthcoming.

³ See the Eighth Book of 'Paradise Lost':—

Under his forming hands a Creature grew,
Manlike, but different Sex, so lovely faire,

it truth:—I am more zealous in this affair, because I have never yet been able to perceive how anything can be known for truth by consecutive reasoning—and yet it must be. Can it be that even the greatest Philosopher ever arrived at his Goal without putting aside numerous objections? However it may be, O for a life of Sensations rather than of Thoughts! It is “a Vision in the form of Youth,” a shadow of reality to come—and this consideration has further convinced me,—for it has come as auxiliary to another favourite speculation of mine,—that we shall enjoy ourselves hereafter by having what we called happiness on Earth repeated in a finer tone. And yet such a fate can only befall those who delight in Sensation, rather than hunger as you do after Truth. Adam’s dream will do here, and seems to be a Conviction that Imagination and its empyreal reflexion, is the same as human life and its spiritual repetition. But, as I was saying, the simple imaginative Mind may have its rewards in the repetition of its own silent Working coming continually on the Spirit with a fine Suddenness. To compare great things with small, have you never, by being surprised with an old Melody, in a delicious place by a delicious voice, *felt* over again your very speculations and surmises at the time it first operated on your soul? do you not remember forming to yourself the Singer’s face—more beautiful than it was possible, and yet, with the elevation of the Moment, you did not think so? Even then you were mounted on the Wings of Imagination, so high that the prototype must be hereafter—that delicious face you will see. What a time! I am continually running away from the subject. Sure this cannot be exactly the case with a complex mind—one that is imaginative, and at the same time careful of its fruits,—who would exist partly on Sensation, partly on thought—to whom it is necessary that “years should bring the philosophic Mind?”¹ Such a one I consider yours, and therefore it is necessary to your eternal happiness that you not only drink this old Wine of Heaven, which I shall call the redigestion of our most ethereal Musings upon Earth, but also increase in knowledge, and know all things. I am glad to hear that you are in a fair way for Easter. You will soon get through your unpleasant reading, and then!—but the world is full of troubles,

That what seemd fair in all the World, seemd now
 Mean, or in her summd up...
 She disappeerd, and left me dark, I wak’d
 To find her, or for ever to deplore
 Her loss, and other pleasures all abjure :
 When out of hope, behold her, not far off,
 Such as I saw her in my dream...

¹ “Mr. Bailey well remembered”, says Lord Houghton, “the exceeding delight that Keats took in Wordsworth’s ‘Ode to Immortality.’ He was never weary of repeating it.”

and I have not much reason to think myself pestered with many.

I think Jane or Marianne has a better opinion of me than I deserve; for, really and truly, I do not think my Brother's illness connected with mine—you know more of the real Cause than they do; nor have I any chance of being rack'd as you have been. You perhaps at one time thought there was such a thing as worldly happiness to be arrived at, at certain periods of time marked out,—you have of necessity from your disposition been thus led away—I scarcely remember counting upon any happiness—I look not for it if it be not in the present hour,—nothing startles me beyond the moment. The Setting Sun will always set me to rights, or if a Sparrow come before my Window, I take part in its existence and pick about the gravel. The first thing that strikes me on hearing a misfortune having befallen another is this—"Well, it cannot be helped: he will have the pleasure of trying the resources of his Spirit"—and I beg now, my dear Bailey, that hereafter should you observe anything cold in me not to put it to the account of heartlessness, but abstraction—for I assure you I sometimes feel not the influence of a passion or affection during a whole Week—and so long this sometimes continues, I begin to suspect myself, and the genuineness of my feelings at other times—thinking them a few barren Tragedy Tears.

My brother Tom is much improved—he is going to Devonshire—whither I shall follow him. At present, I am just arrived at Dorking—to change the Scene—change the Air, and give me a spur to wind up my Poem, of which there are wanting 500 lines. I should have been here a day sooner, but the Reynoldses persuaded me to stop in Town to meet your friend Christie.¹ There were Rice and Martin—we talked about Ghosts. I will have some Talk with Taylor, and let you know,—when please God I come down at Christmas. I will find the Examiner if possible. My best regards to Gleig, my Brothers' to you and Mrs. Bentley.

Your affectionate Friend

John Keats

I want to say much more to you—a few hints will set me going. Direct Burford Bridge near Dorking.

¹ Mr. Dilke notes—"This Christie was I think Lockhart's friend—who was unhappily drawn into Lockhart's quarrel with John Scott and killed him. Strange that this quarrel and the consequent loss of life of Scott, the Editor of the 'London Magazine,' is not once alluded to [in the 'Life, Letters,' &c.], although the quarrel originated in the attack on Lockhart as the writer of the articles on the Cockney School, or as Editor of 'Blackwood.' Christie I had met before and have since the duel: and he appeared to be a mild amiable man."

XXVI.

To GEORGE AND THOMAS KEATS.

Teignmouth.

Hampstead,
[28 December 1817.]

My dear Brothers,

I must crave your pardon for not having written ere this.
 * * * I saw Kean return to the public in "Richard III.," and finely he did it, and, at the request of Reynolds, I went to criticize his Duke in Rich[ar]d. The critique is in to-day's "Champion," which I send you, with the "Examiner," in which you will find very proper lamentation on the obsoletion of Christmas Gambols and pastimes: but it was mixed up with so much egotism of that drivelling nature that pleasure is entirely lost. Hone, the publisher's trial, you must find very amusing, and, as Englishmen, very encouraging: his *Not Guilty* is a thing, which not to have been, would have dulled still more Liberty's Emblazoning. Lord Ellenborough has been paid in his own coin. Wooler and Hone¹ have done us an essential service. I have had two very pleasant evenings with Dilke, yesterday and to-day, and am at this moment just come from him, and feel in the humour to go on with this, begun in the morning, and from which he came to fetch me. I spent Friday evening with Wells,² and went next morning to see "Death on the Pale Horse."³ It is a wonderful picture, when West's age is considered; but there is nothing to be intense upon, no women one feels mad to kiss, no face swelling into reality. The excellence of every art is its intensity, capable of making all disagreeables evaporate from their being in close relationship with Beauty and Truth.⁴ Examine "King Lear," and you will

XXVI. It was clearly not to this particular experience of 'Richard III.' that Keats owed the passage in Book III of 'Endymion' describing the refuse and treasures at the bottom of the sea (lines 120 to 136). That piece of realization was doubtless due to familiarity with Clarence's dream of drowning, recounted just before he was murdered; and the third book of 'Endymion' was completed in the autumn of 1817: the main distinction between the passages is that Keats lets his imagination run riot in details of things not necessary to this purpose, while his master does not employ a superfluous word.

¹ Popular publishers, tried for "blasphemous and seditious libels."

² Charles Wells, the author of 'Stories after Nature' and 'Joseph and his Brethren.' For Keats's sonnet to him, see Volume I, page 42.

³ See Volume III, page 239, for a reference to this picture in Keats's paper on Kean in 'Richard Duke of York.'

⁴ This phrase points again to the developement of that line of thought in Keats which found its highest expression in the Ode on a Grecian Urn, especially the closing lines

Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all
 Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

find this exemplified throughout: but in this picture we have unpleasantness without any momentous depth of speculation excited, in which to bury its repulsiveness. The picture is larger than "Christ rejected."

I dined with Haydon the Sunday after you left, and had a very pleasant day. I dined too (for I have been out too much lately) with Horace Smith, and met his two brothers, with Hill and Kingston, and one Du Bois. They only served to convince me how superior humour is to wit, in respect to enjoyment. These men say things which make one start, without making one feel; they are all alike; their manners are alike; they all know fashionables; they have all a mannerism in their very eating and drinking, in their mere handling a decanter. They talked of Kean and his low company. "Would I were with that company instead of yours," said I to myself! I know such like acquaintance will never do for me, and yet I am going to Reynolds on Wednesday. Brown and Dilke walked with me and back to the Christmas pantomime. I had not a dispute, but a disquisition, with Dilke upon various subjects; several things dove-tailed in my mind, and at once it struck me what quality went to form a man of achievement, especially in literature, and which Shakespeare possessed so enormously—I mean *Negative Capability*, that is, when a man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason. Coleridge, for instance, would let go by a fine isolated verisimilitude caught from the Penetralium of mystery, from being incapable of remaining content with half-knowledge. This pursued through volumes would perhaps take us no further than this, that with a great poet the sense of Beauty overcomes every other consideration, or rather obliterates all consideration.

Shelley's poem¹ is out, and there are words about its being

¹ Keats can hardly have known what intolerable vexation and disappointment Shelley was undergoing in his relations with the Olliers, whose doings with Keats's own first volume of poems had been so little to his satisfaction. 'Laon and Cythna,' the book here referred to, had occupied months of Shelley's thought and labour, and was actually printed off and ready for issue when Mr. Charles Ollier found himself afraid to publish it. The full story may be read in my book entitled 'The Shelley Library' (Part I, 1886). Suffice it to say here that the book was withdrawn till it could be toned down by means of numerous cancel-leaves which made the hero and heroine, originally brother and sister, strangers in blood, and did away some antitheistic passages. 'Laon and Cythna' was ready before the end of November; and a few copies were distributed. By the middle of December the struggle between publisher and poet was raging. On the 27th of that month Shelley was clamouring for the last proofs of the cancel-leaves. Up to the 15th of January he had not received completed copies of the book as converted into 'The Revolt of Islam'; but a week later he was giving instructions about advertizing without relaxation: hence the book was no doubt finally out by then. Keats's reference must be to the volume in its original form, which was at that moment undergoing revision after a somewhat active attempt to recover all copies sent out to the booksellers.

objected to as much as "Queen Mab" was. Poor Shelley, I think he has his Quota of good qualities, in sooth la!! Write soon to your most sincere friend and affectionate Brother,
John.

XXVII.

TO GEORGE AND THOMAS KEATS.

Teignmouth.

Featherstone Buildings, Monday.

[5 January 1818.]

My Dear Brothers :

I ought to have written before, and you should have had a long letter last week, but I undertook the "Champion" for Reynolds, who is at Exeter. I wrote two articles, one on the Drury Lane Pantomime, the other on the Covent Garden new Tragedy,¹ which they have not put in. The one they have inserted is so badly punctuated that, you perceive, I am determined never to write more without some care in that particular. Wells tells me that you are licking your chops, Tom, in expectation of my book coming out. I am sorry to say I have not begun my corrections yet: to-morrow I set out. I called on Sawrey this morning. He did not seem to be at all out at anything I said and the enquiries I made with regard to your spitting of blood, and moreover desired me to ask you to send him a correct account of all your sensations and symptoms concerning the palpitation and the spitting and the cough—if you have any. Your last letter gave me a great pleasure, for I think the invalid is in a better spirit there along the Edge;² and as for George, I must immediately, now I think of it, correct a little misconception of a part of my last letter. The Miss Reynolds have never said one word against me about you,³ or by any means endeavoured to lessen you in my estimation. That is not what I referred to; but the manner and thoughts which I knew they internally had towards you, time will show. Wells and Severn dined with me yesterday. We had a very

¹ See Postscript. The tragedy was 'Retribution, or the Chieftain's Daughter,'—the pantomime 'Don Giovanni.' The two papers appeared in 'The Champion' for the 4th of January 1818, and were reprinted in the Library edition of Keats's works as reissued in 1883. They will be found at the end of the third volume of the Poems in the present edition.

² The brothers were staying at Teignmouth on the south coast of Devon: the expression 'along the Edge' is peculiar.

³ The curious locution may or may not be Keats's. What he meant, at all events, was to assure his brothers that the Misses Reynolds had not said anything to him *against* George. It will be noticed that there is an omission at the beginning of the last letter. Doubtless it is to this omission that we owe the air of mystery here about Jane and Mariane Reynolds and George Keats,

pleasant day. I pitched upon another bottle of claret. We enjoyed ourselves very much; were all very witty and full of rhyme. We played a concert¹ from 4 o'clock till 10—drank your healths, the Hunts, and *N. B. Severn*, Peter Pindar's. I said on that day the only good thing I was ever guilty of. We were talking about Stephens and the 1s. [?] Gallery. I said I wondered that careful folks would go there, for although it was but a shilling, still you had to pay through the Nose. I saw the Peachey family in a box at Drury one night. I have got such a curious,² or rather I had such, now I am in my own hand.

I have had a great deal of pleasant time with Rice lately, and am getting initiated into a little band. They call drinking deep dyin' scarlet. They call good wine a pretty tippie, and call getting a child knocking out an apple; stopping at a tavern they call hanging out. Where do you sup? is where do you hang out?

Thursday I promised to dine with Wordsworth, and the weather is so bad that I am undecided, for he lives at Mortimer street. I had an invitation to meet him at Kingston's, but not liking that place I sent my excuse. What I think of doing to-day is to dine in Mortimer street (Wordsth), and sup here in the Feath buildings, as Mr. Wells has invited me. On Saturday, I called on Wordsworth³ before he went to Kingston's, and was surprised to find him with a stiff collar. I saw his spouse,

¹ Each one, that is to say, imitated vocally some musical instrument, according to a custom in which Keats and his brothers and intimates indulged.

² A word seems to have been omitted here.

³ Apropos of Lord Houghton's comment on Letter No. XXXVI (*post*), Mr. Dilke, in his annotated copy of the 'Life, Letters' &c., wrote a note on this very meeting. The present letter was not then published. Mr. Dilke's note stands thus:—"When Keats first called on Wordsworth he was kept waiting for a long time, and when Wordsworth entered he was in full flower, knee breeches, silk stockings &c., and in a great hurry as he was going to dine with one of the Commissioners of Stamps. As Keats told this story, and with something of anger, the circumstance perhaps had unconsciously &c." No apology is needed for placing in juxtaposition with this Lady Georgiana Chatterton's delightful account of Wordsworth and yet another poet in court dress:—"I called afterwards at Rogers's house, to ask permission for some friends, who are coming to town for the day, to see his house and pictures to-morrow afternoon. He was at home, and sent word that he particularly wished to see me. I got out of the carriage and was shown into the drawing-room, where, to my great surprise, I found him and dear old Wordsworth in Court dresses, with swords and cocked hats, dancing the minuet de la cour. Wordsworth said he was rehearsing his bows for the Queen's ball, and getting a lesson from Rogers about it. Wordsworth's dress did very well, except his thick, grey worsted stockings, which we all exclaimed against. He declared that he could not wear any other kind, so I persuaded him to put a black silk pair over them. This solved the difficulty; he consented, and we had the satisfaction of seeing the dear old poet in the evening looking very picturesque in his Court dress." See 'Memoirs of Georgiana, Lady Chatterton; with some Passages from her Diary.' By the late Edward Heneage Dering (Second Edition: London and Leamington Art and Book Company).

and I think his daughter. I forget whether I had written my last before my Sunday evening at Haydon's—no, I did not, or I should have told you, Tom, of a young man you met at Paris, at Scott's, of the [name of] Ritchie.¹ I think he is going to Fezan, in Africa; then to proceed if possible like Mungo Park. He was very polite to me, and inquired very particularly after you. Then there was Wordsworth, Lamb, Monkhouse, Landseer, Kingston, and your humble servant. Lamb got tipsy and blew up Kingston—proceeding so far as to take the candle across the room, hold it to his face, and show us what a soft fellow he was.

I astonished Kingston at supper with a pertinacity in favour of drinking, keeping my two glasses at work in a knowing way. He sent me a hare last week, which I sent to Mrs. Dilke. Brown is not come back. I and Dilke are getting capital friends. He is going to take the "Champion." He has sent his farce to Covent Garden. I met Bob Harris² on the steps at Covent Garden; we had a good deal of curious chat. He came out with his old humble opinion. The Covent Garden pantomime is a very nice one, but they have a middling Harlequin, a bad Pantaloon, a worse Clown, and a shocking Columbine, who is one of the Miss Dennets.

I suppose you will see my critique on the new tragedy in the next week's "Champion." It is a shocking bad one. I have not seen Hunt; he was out when I called. Mrs. Hunt looks as well as ever I saw her after her confinement. There is an article in the sennight "Examiner" on Godwin's "Mandeville," signed E. K. I think it Miss Kent's.³ I will send it. There are fine subscriptions going on for Hone.⁴

You ask me what degrees there are between Scott's novels and those of Smollet. They appear to me to be quite distinct in every particular, more especially in their aim. Scott endeavours to throw so interesting and romantic a colouring into common and low characters as to give them a touch of the sublime. Smollet, on the contrary, pulls down and levels what

¹ Joseph Ritchie, who started on his proposed journey, and died in Africa, wrote a charming poetical Farewell to England, which, as Dr. Garnett has pointed out to me, was printed by Alaric Watts in his 'Poetical Album.' The reference to the house at which Tom Keats met Ritchie is extremely interesting, as indicating how poor John Scott probably became possessed of that copy-book of Tom's in which so many of the early poems of John Keats were written out fair by his younger brother. See Volume I, pages x and xi.

² Robert Harris was the manager of Covent Garden Theatre. See Volume III, notes to the criticism of Dillon's 'Retribution.'

³ The article which Keats seems to have attributed to his admirer Miss Bessy Kent (Hunt's sister-in-law) was in fact by Shelley, "E. K." standing for "Elfin Knight," a pseudonym of Shelley's. The review appeared in 'The Examiner' for Sunday the 28th of December 1817.

⁴ See page 49 (*ante*).

with other men would continue romance. The grand parts of Scott are within the reach of more minds than the finest humours in "Humphrey Clinker." I forget whether that fine thing of the Sargeant is Fielding's or Smollet's, but it gives me more pleasure than the whole novel of "The Antiquary." You must remember what I mean.¹ Some one says to the Sargeant: "That's a non-sequiter!" "If you come to that," replies the Sargeant, "you're another!"

I see by Wells' letter Mr. Abbey does not overstock you with money. You must write. I have not seen——² yet, but expect it on Wednesday. I am afraid it is gone. Severn tells me he has an order for some drawings for the Emperor of Russia.

I was at a dance at Redhall's, and passed a pleasant time enough—drank deep, and won 10.6 at cutting for half guineas.³ There was a younger brother of the Squibes made himself very conspicuous after the ladies had retired from the supper table by giving Mater [word illegible]. Mr. Redhall said he did not understand any thing but plain English, whereat Rice egged the young fool to say the word plainly out, after which there was an enquiry as to the derivation of the word while two parsons and grammarians were sitting together and settling the matter, Wm. Squibes interrupting said a very good thing, Gentlemen, says he, I have always understood it to be a root and not a derivative

Bailey was there and seemed to enjoy the evening. Rice said he cared less about the hour than any one; and the proof is his dancing—he cares not for time, dancing as if he was deaf. Old Redhall not being used to give parties, had no idea of the quantity of wine that would be drank, and he actually put in readiness on the kitchen stairs eight dozen.

Every one inquires after you, and every one desires their

¹ "‘Excuse me there, Mr. Serjeant,’ quoth Partridge, ‘that’s a *non sequitur*.’ ‘None of your outlandish lingo,’ answered the Serjeant, leaping from his seat; ‘I will not sit and hear the cloth abused.’—‘You mistake me, friend,’ cries Partridge. ‘I did not mean to abuse the cloth: I only said your conclusion was a *non sequitur*.’ ‘You are another,’ cries the Serjeant, ‘an’ you come to that, no more a sequitur than yourself.’”—Fielding’s ‘Tom Jones,’ Book IX, chapter 6.

² Mr. Speed says "The word is not legible, but he evidently referred to some play of the day." This is not at all evident to me.

³ Mr. Jeffrey gives this passage as "won 10£ at cutting for half crowns"; but Mr. Speed reads "10. 6 at cutting for half guineas." No doubt the incident is the same as that referred to by Lord Houghton when he says Keats "speaks of having drunk too much as a rare piece of joviality, and of having won 10l. at cards as a great hit." Whether Mr. Speed or Mr. Jeffrey misread the letter who shall say? With reference to the gap in the letter Mr. Speed says, "In many places it is almost illegible...and considering how many words I would have to leave to conjecture, I have concluded to omit the whole passage." Mr. Jeffrey attempted to copy it; but I have only been able to supply a portion from his imperfect transcript.

remembrances to you. I have seen Fanny twice lately—she inquired particularly after you and wants a co-partnership letter from you. She has been unwell, but is improving—I think she will be quick well. Mrs. Abbey was saying that the Keatses were ever indolent, that they would ever be so, and that it is born in them. Well, whispered Fanny to me, if it is born with us, how can we help it. She seems very anxious for a letter. As I asked her what I should get for her, she said a “Medal of the Princess.”¹ I called on Haslam—we dined very well. You must get well, Tom, and then I shall feel whole and general² as the winter air. Give me as many letters as you like, and write to Sawrey soon. I received a short letter from Bailey about Cripps,³ and one from Haydon, ditto. Haydon thinks he improved very much. Mrs. Wells’ desires⁴ particularly to Tom and her respects to George, and I desire no better than to be ever your most affectionate brother,

John.

P.S. I had not opened the “Champion” before. I found both my articles in it.

XXVIII.

To JOHN TAYLOR.

Saturday morning
[Postmark, 10 January 1818.]

My dear Taylor

Several things have kept me from you lately:—first you had got into a little hell, which I was not anxious to reconnoitre—secondly, I have made a vow not to call again without my first book: so you may expect to see me in four days. Thirdly, I have been racketing too much, and do not feel over well. I have seen Wordsworth frequently—Dined with him last Monday—Reynolds, I suppose you have seen. Just scribble me thus many lines to let me know you are in the land of the living, and well. Remember me to the Fleet Street Household—and should you see any from Percy Street, give my kindest regards to them.

Your sincere friend John Keats

¹ A medal commemorative of the recent untimely death of the Princess Charlotte, on the 6th of November 1817.

² Mr. Speed reads ‘genial’ for ‘general’; but the allusion is to ‘Macbeth’ (Act III, Scene iv),—“general as the casing air.”

³ See *ante*, pages 36, 37, 40, 43, 45, 46, and *post*, page 56 and later.

⁴ The expression “Mrs. Wells’ desires,” though quite an unusual one, may have been written by Keats and may possibly have been what he meant to write; but I do not remember meeting with this form of message elsewhere, either in Keats’s letters or in those of any other writer.

XXVIII. The reference under the head of “secondly” is to the first Book of ‘Endymion’ as written fair and revised for the press.

XXIX.

To BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON.

Lisson Grove North, Paddington.

Saturday Morn.

[Postmark, Hampstead 10 January 1818.]

My dear Haydon,

I should have seen you ere this, but on account of my sister being in Town: so that when I have sometimes made ten paces towards you, Fanny has called me into the City; and the Christmas Holydays are your only time to see Sisters, that is if they are so situated as mine. I will be with you early next week—to-night it should be, but we have a sort of a Club every Saturday evening—to-morrow, but I have on that day an insuperable engagement. Cripps has been down to me, and appears sensible that a binding to you would be of the greatest advantage to him—if such a thing be done it cannot be before 150£ or 200£ are secured in subscriptions to him. I will write to Bailey about it, give a Copy of the Subscribers' names to every one I know who is likely to get a 5£ for him. I will leave a Copy at Taylor and Hessey's, Rodwell and Martin, and will ask Kingston and Co. to cash up.

Your friendship for me is now getting into its teens—and I feel the past. Also every day older I get—the greater is my idea of your achievements in Art: and I am convinced that there are three things to rejoice at in this Age—The Excursion, Your Pictures, and Hazlitt's depth of Taste.

Yours affectionately

John Keats—

XXIX. Haydon's journal contains what appears to be the rough draft of his answer to this letter. He begins with the closing theme, thus:—

"My dear Keats, I feel greatly delighted by your high opinion, allow me to add sincerely a fourth to be proud of—*John Keats' genius!*—This I speak from my heart.—You and Bewick are the only men I ever liked with all my heart, for Wordsworth being older, there is no equality tho' I reverence him and love him devotedly—and now you know my peculiar feelings in wishing to have a notice when you cannot keep an engagement with me; there can never be as long as we live any ground of dispute between us. My friendship for you is beyond its teens, and beginning to ripen to maturity—I always saw through your nature at once and you shall always find me a devoted and affectionate brother.—With respect to Cripps, I sincerely think it would be for our mutual advantage to have him bound, I would instruct him for the first two years, and then in the last he would be a great assistance to me. I will subscribe 5£—it is all I can afford, and all which ought to be expected of me, as I will do all in my power to inform him—I like him much, he is docile and industrious and improves rapidly—I hope we shall succeed in getting the money—do your utmost and so will I.—In the mean time I will go on with his Studies.—With respect to our meeting, the sooner my dear Keats the better—but accept this engagement as long as we live—every Sunday at three I shall be happy to see you as long as I live and you live, and as long as I have a bit of beef to give you. When you have other engagements more important come the Sunday following."

XXX.

To GEORGE AND THOMAS KEATS.

Teignmouth.

Hampstead,

Tuesday [13 January 1818].

My dear Brothers,

I am certain, I think, of having a letter to-morrow morning ; for I expected one so much this morning, having been in town two days, at the end of which my expectations began to get up a little. I found two on the table, one from Bailey and one from Haydon. I am quite perplexed in a world of doubts and fancies—there is nothing stable in the world ; uproar's your only music—I don't mean to include Bailey in this and so I dismiss him from this with all the opprobrium he deserves—that is in so many words, he is one of the noblest men alive at the present day. In a note to Haydon about a week ago (which I wrote with a full sense of what he had done, and how he had never manifested any little mean drawback in his value of me) I said if there were three things superior in the modern world, they were "The Excursion," Haydon's Pictures, and Hazlitt's depth of Taste. So I do believe—not thus speaking with any poor vanity—that works of genius are the first things in this world. No ! for that sort of probity and disinterestedness which such men as Bailey possess, does hold and grasp the tip-top of any spiritual honors that can be paid to anything in this world. And moreover having this feeling at this present come over me in its full force, I sat down to write to you with a grateful heart, in that I had not a Brother who did not feel and credit me for a deeper feeling and devotion for his uprightness, than for any marks of genius however splendid. I was speaking about doubts and fancies—I mean there has been a quarrel of a severe nature between Haydon and Reynolds and another ("the Devil rides upon a fiddle stick")¹ between Hunt and Haydon. The first grew from the Sunday on which Haydon invited some friends to meet Wordsworth. Reynolds never went, and never sent any Notice about it, this offended Haydon more than it ought to have done—he wrote a very sharp and high note to Reynolds and then another in palliation

XXX. This letter as given by Lord Houghton is dated the 21st of April, probably by accident. It must clearly belong to January, as it refers to the preceding letter to Haydon ; and the allusion to the second Book of 'Endymion' in the next letter seems to imply that the first was delivered as intended.

¹ See 'The First Part of King Henry the Fourth,' Act II, Scene iv :—

Falstaff. Heigh, heigh, the Devill rides upon a Fiddle-sticke : what's the matter.

Hostesse. The Sherife and all the Watch are at the doore.

—but which Reynolds feels as an aggravation of the first.—Considering all things, Haydon's frequent neglect of his appointments &c., his notes were bad enough to put Reynolds on the right side of the question—but then Reynolds has no power of sufferance; no idea of having the thing against him; so he answered Haydon in one of the most cutting letters I ever read; exposing to himself all his own weaknesses and going on to an excess, which whether it is just or no, is what I would fain have unsaid, the fact is they are both in the right and both in the wrong.

The quarrel with Hunt I understand thus far. Mrs. H. was in the habit of borrowing silver of Haydon—the last time she did so, Haydon asked her to return it at a certain time—she did not—Haydon sent for it—Hunt went to expostulate on the indelicacy &c.—they got to words and parted for ever. All I hope is at sometime to bring them all together again.—Lawk! Molly there's been such doings—Yesterday evening I made an appointment with Wells to go to a private theatre, and it being in the neighbourhood of Drury Lane, and thinking we might be fatigued with sitting the whole evening in one dirty hole, I got the Drury Lane ticket, and therewith we divided the evening with a spice of Richard III.—

[About 19 January 1818.]

Good Lord! I began this letter nearly a week ago, what have I been doing since—I have been—I mean not been sending last Sunday's paper to you I believe because it was not near me—for I cannot find it and my conscience presses heavy on me for not sending it. You would have had one last Thursday, but I was called away, and have been about somewhere ever since. Where? What? Well I rejoice almost that I have not heard from you because no news is good news. I cannot for the world recollect why I was called away, all I know is that there has been a dance at Dilke's, and another at the London Coffee House; to both of which I went. But I must tell you in another letter the circumstances thereof—for though a week should have passed since I wrote on the other side it quite appals me—I can only write in scraps and patches. Brown is returned from Hampstead—Haydon has returned an answer in the same style—they are all dreadfully irritated against each other. On Sunday I saw Hunt and dined with Haydon, met Hazlitt and Bewick there, and took Haslam with me—forgot to speak about Cripps though I broke my engagement to Haslam's on purpose. Mem.—Haslam came to meet me, found me at Breakfast, had the goodness to go with me my way. I have just finished the revision of my First Book, and shall take it to Taylor's to-morrow. Do not let me see many days pass without hearing from you.

Your most affectionate Brother,
John.

XXXI.

To JOHN TAYLOR.

Friday, 23 January 1818.

My dear Taylor,

I have spoke to Haydon about the drawing. He would do it with all his Art and Heart too, if so I will it ; however, he has written thus to me ; but I must tell you, first, he intends painting a finished Picture from the Poem. Thus he writes—"When I do anything for your Poem it must be effectual—an honour to both of us : to hurry up a sketch for the season won't do. I think an engraving from your head, from a chalk drawing of mine, done with all my might, to which I would put my name, would answer Taylor's idea better than the other. Indeed, I am sure of it. This I will do, and this will be effectual, and as I have not done it for any other human being, it will have an effect." What think you of this? Let me hear. I shall have my second Book in readiness forthwith.

Yours most sincerely

John Keats

If Reynolds calls tell him three lines will be acceptable, for I am squat at Hampstead.

XXXII.

To BENJAMIN BAILEY.

Friday, 23 January 1818.

My dear Bailey,

Twelve days have pass'd since your last reached me.—What has gone through the myriads of human minds since the 12th? We talk of the immense Number of Books, the Volumes ranged thousands by thousands—but perhaps more goes through the human intelligence in Twelve days than ever was written.—*How has that unfortunate family lived through the twelve?* One saying of yours I shall never forget—you may not recollect it—it being perhaps said when you were looking on the Surface and seeming of Humanity alone, without a thought of the past or the future—or the deeps of good and evil—you were at that moment estranged from speculation, and I think you have arguments ready for the Man who would utter it to you—this is a formidable preface for a simple thing—merely you said, "Why should woman suffer?" Aye, why should she? "By heavens, I'd coin my very soul, and drop my Blood for Drachmas!"¹ These things are, and he, who feels how incompetent the most skyeey Knight-errantry is to heal this bruised fairness, is like a sensitive leaf on the hot hand of thought.—Your tearing, my

¹ 'Julius Cæsar,' Act IV, Scene iii.

dear friend, a spiritless and gloomy letter up, to re-write to me, is what I shall never forget—it was to me a real thing. Things have happened lately of great perplexity—you must have heard of them—Reynolds and Haydon retorting and recriminating, and parting for ever—the same thing has happened between Haydon and Hunt. It is unfortunate—Men should bear with each other : there lives not the Man who may not be cut up, aye Lashed to pieces on his weakest side. The best of men have but a portion of good in them—a kind of spiritual yeast in their frames, which creates the ferment of existence—by which a Man is propelled to act, and strive, and buffet with Circumstance. The sure way, Bailey, is first to know a Man's faults, and then be passive—if after that he insensibly draws you towards him then you have no power to break the link. Before I felt interested in either Reynolds or Haydon, I was well read in their faults ; yet, knowing them, I have been cementing gradually with both. I have an affection for them both, for reasons almost opposite—and to both must I of necessity cling, supported always by the hope that, when a little time, a few years, shall have tried me more fully in their esteem, I may be able to bring them together. The time must come, because they have both hearts : and they will recollect the best parts of each other, when this gust is overblown.—I had a message from you through a letter to Jane¹—I think, about Cripps—there can be no idea of binding until a sufficient sum is sure for him—and even then the thing should be maturely considered by all his helpers—I shall try my luck upon as many fat purses as I can meet with.—Cripps is improving very fast : I have the greater hopes of him because he is so slow in development. A Man of great executing powers at twenty, with a look and a speech almost stupid, is sure to do something.

I have just looked through the second side of your Letter,—I feel a great content at it.—I was at Hunt's the other day, and he surprised me with a real authenticated lock of *Milton's Hair*. I know you would like what I wrote thereon, so here it is—as they say of a Sheep in a Nursery Book.

Chief of organic numbers !
 Old Scholar of the Spheres !
 Thy spirit never slumbers,
 But rolls about our ears,
 For ever, and for ever !
 O what a mad endeavour

Worketh he,
 Who to thy sacred and ennobled hearse
 Would offer a burnt sacrifice of verse
 And melody.

¹ Jane Reynolds.

How heavenward thou soundest,
 Live Temple of sweet noise,
 And Discord unconfoundest,
 Giving Delight new joys,
 And Pleasure nobler pinions !
 O, where are thy dominions ?

Lend thine ear
 To a young Delian oath,—aye, by thy soul,
 By all that from thy mortal lips did roll,
 And by the kernel of thine earthly love,
 Beauty, in things on earth, and things above,
 I swear !

When every childish fashion,
 Has vanish'd from my rhyme,
 Will I, grey-gone in passion,
 Leave to an after-time,
 Hymning and harmony
 Of thee, and of thy works, and of thy life ;
 But vain is now the burning and the strife,
 Pangs are in vain, until I grow high-rife
 With old Philosophy,
 And mad with glimpses of futurity !

For many years my offering must be hush'd ;
 When I do speak, I'll think upon this hour,
 Because I feel my forehead hot and flush'd,
 Even at the simplest vassal of thy power,—
 A lock of thy bright hair,—
 Sudden it came,
 And I was startled, when I caught thy name
 Coupled so unaware ;
 Yet, at the moment, temperate was my blood.
 I thought I had beheld it from the flood.

This I did at Hunt's,¹ at his request—perhaps I should have done something better alone and at home.—I have sent my first

¹ Robert Browning possessed, and published in 'The Athenæum' for the 7th of July 1883, a letter from Leigh Hunt containing the pedigree of the lock of Milton's hair celebrated in Keats's poem. This pedigree, though not sufficiently authoritative to satisfy a rigid regard for the ordinary laws of evidence, was ample justification for the faith of the imaginative Keats : it is as follows :

" 'More last words' ! I find that I must deprive Mrs. Jago of another bit of her space ; but the page is of a good size, and I hope she can write as small as myself, and so retain space enough. It is to say a word respecting the lock of Milton's hair. Mrs. Jago asked me the other day, very naturally, about its authenticity ; and this has made me consider that you and Mrs. Browning might as naturally, indeed still more so, as you were so good as to accept my rude bit of pull from it, be glad to be told what I told her. The evidence simply

Book to the press, and this afternoon shall begin preparing the second. My visit to you will be a great spur to quicken the proceeding. I have not had your Sermon returned—I long to make it the subject of a letter to you—What do they say at Oxford?

I trust you and Gleig pass much fine time together. Remember me to him and Whitehead. My brother Tom is getting stronger, but his spitting of Blood continues. I sat down to read "King Lear" yesterday, and felt the greatness of the thing

amounts to this; though I accepted it, as I think you will do, with a trusting as well as a willing faith. The lock was given me, together with those of Dr. Johnson and Swift, by the late Dr. Batty, the physician, a man of excellent character, to whom I was to *bequeath them back* if he survived me, which he has not done. To Dr. Batty the three locks were given by Hoole, the translator of Tasso, &c., and Hoole, though a bad translator, was a very honest man. And to Hoole they were given by Dr. Johnson himself, whose scrupulous veracity as to matters of fact is well known. I forget at this distance of time what Batty further said to me on the subject, for it was a long while ago, and I was in a confusion of pleasure at the moment; but my impression is that the locks of Milton and Swift were given to Johnson while he was writing the 'Lives of the Poets,' and that Milton's was one, or part of one, which had been at the back of a miniature of the poet belonging to Addison. Addison, you know, personally knew and took an interest in the welfare of Milton's youngest surviving daughter, Deborah. I do not find any mention of him among the possessors of portraits of Milton, and it does not seem likely that the miniature and the lock would become divorced. Yet I think you will agree with me that there is strong presumptive evidence in these three descents of the belief on the part of true and honourable men, one of whom asks me to bequeath the lock back to him in case I died first; nor do I myself feel the least doubt of the lock, short of positive certainty."

The present whereabouts of the main lock, I have failed to ascertain. Thornton Hunt had it; but the family has lost sight of it. A reference to "Milton's hair" in a letter from Browning to Hunt, published in the 'Correspondence,' Volume II, page 267, led me to apply in 1883 to Browning who told me that he still possessed "a very small portion" of the lock, given to himself and Mrs. Browning by Hunt at Hammersmith on the 13th of July 1856. "He detached it with trembling fingers, and wrote on the envelope 'A bit of a lock of the hair of Milton. To Robert and E. B. Browning from Leigh Hunt. God bless them.'"

Hunt addressed these sonnets to Dr. Batty on the subject of the hair, and published them in his 'Foliage' (1818). They are now transcribed from the copy of 'Foliage' which he presented to Keats:—

1.

I felt my spirit leap, and look at thee
Through my changed colour with glad grateful stare,
When after shewing us this glorious hair,
Thou didst turn short, and bending pleasantly
With gracious hand gav'st the great lock to me.
An honouring gift indeed! which I will wear
About me, while I breathe this strenuous air,
That nursed his Apollonian tresses free.
I'll wear it, not as my inherited due,
(For there is one, whom had he kept his art

up to the Writing of a Sonnet preparatory thereto : in my next you shall have it.¹ There were some miserable reports of Rice's health—I went, and lo ! Master Jemmy had been to the play the night before, and was out at the time—he always comes on his legs like a Cat. I have seen a good deal of Wordsworth. Hazlitt is lecturing on Poetry at the Surrey Institution—I shall be there next Tuesday.

Your most affectionate friend
John Keats.

For Freedom still, nor left her for the crew
Of lucky slaves in his misgiving heart,
I would have begged thy leave to give it to)
Yet not without some claims, though far apart.

2.

It lies before me there, and my own breath
Stirs it's thin outer threads, as though beside
The living head I stood in honoured pride,
Talking of lovely things that conquer death.
Perhaps he pressed it once, or underneath
Ran his fine fingers, when he leant, blank-eyed,
And saw, in fancy, Adam and his bride
With their heaped locks, or his own Delphic wreath.
There seems a love in hair, though it be dead.
It is the gentlest, yet the strongest thread
Of our frail plant,—a blossom from the tree
Surviving the proud trunk ;—as if it said,
Patience and Gentleness is Power. In me
Behold affectionate eternity.

3.

A liberal taste, and a wise gentleness
Have ever been the true physician's dower,
As still is visible in the placid power
Of those old Grecian busts ; and helps to bless
The balmy name of Haller, and the address
Of cordial Garth ; and him in Cowley's bower,
Harvey ; and Milton's own exotic flower,
Young Deodati, plucked from his caress.
To add to these an ear for the sweet hold
Of music, and an eye, ay and a hand
For forms which the smooth Graces tend and follow,
Shews thee indeed true offspring of the bland
And vital god, whom she of happy mould,
The Larissæan beauty, bore Apollo.

Hunt's compliment to the descendents of Asculapius in No. 3 is very happy. The parenthetic allusion in No. 1 is of course to Wordsworth. Compare 'The Lost Leader' by Robert Browning. The reference at the top of page 62 is to 'Endymion.'

¹ It will be found in letter No. XXXIII.

XXXIII.

To GEORGE AND THOMAS KEATS.

Teignmouth.

Friday, 23 January 1818.

My dear Brothers,

I was thinking what hindered me from writing so long, for I have so many things to say to you, and know not where to begin. It shall be upon a thing most interesting to you, my Poem. Well! I have given the first Book to Taylor; he seemed more than satisfied with it, and to my surprise proposed publishing it in Quarto, if Haydon could make a drawing of some event therein, for a Frontispiece.¹ I called on Haydon, he said he would do anything I liked, but said he would rather paint a finished picture, from it, which he seems eager to do; this in a year or two will be a glorious thing for us; and it will be, for Haydon is struck with the 1st Book. I left Haydon and the next day received a letter from him, proposing to make, as he says, with all his might, a finished chalk sketch of my head, to be engraved in the first style and put at the head of my Poem, saying at the same time he had never done the thing for any human being, and that it must have considerable effect as he will put his name to it. I begin to-day to copy my 2nd Book—"thus far into the bowels of the land."² You shall hear whether it will be Quarto or non Quarto, picture or non picture. Leigh Hunt I showed my 1st Book to—he allows it not much merit as a whole; says it is unnatural and made ten objections to it in the mere skimming over. He says the conversation is unnatural and too high-flown for Brother and Sister—says it should be simple, forgetting do ye mind that they are both overshadowed by a supernatural Power, and of force could not speak like Francesca in the "Rimini." He must first prove that Caliban's poetry is unnatural. This with me completely overturns his objections. The fact is he and Shelley are hurt, and perhaps justly, at my not having showed them the affair officiously; and from several hints I have had they appear much disposed to dissect and anatomize any trip or slip I may have made.³—But who's afraid? Aye! Tom! Demme if I am. I went last Tuesday, an hour too late, to Hazlitt's Lecture on Poetry, got there just as they were coming out, when all these pounced upon me—Hazlitt, John Hunt and Son, Wells, Bewick, all the Landseers, Bob Harris, aye and more—the

¹ See letter No. XXXI.² 'Richard III.,' Act V, Scene ii.³ Not knowing whence Keats received his "several hints", I cannot say how far his suppositions as to Shelley and Hunt were well founded; but it seems probable there was some misapprehension.

Landseers enquired after you particularly—I know not whether Wordsworth has left town—But Sunday I dined with Hazlitt and Haydon, also that I took Haslam with me—I dined with Brown lately. Dilke having taken the *Champion Theatricals*¹ was obliged to be in town. Fanny has returned to Walthamstow. Mr. Abbey appeared very glum the last time I went to see her, and said in an indirect way that I had no business to be there—Rice has been ill, but has been mending much lately.

I think a little change has taken place in my intellect lately—I cannot bear to be uninterested or unemployed, I, who for so long a time have been addicted to passiveness. Nothing is finer for the purposes of great productions than a very gradual ripening of the intellectual powers. As an instance of this—observe—I sat down yesterday to read “*King Lear*” once again: the thing appeared to demand the prologue of a sonnet, I wrote it, and began to read²—(I know you would like to see it.)

O golden tongued Romance with serene Lute !
 Fair-plumed Syren, Queen of far-away !
 Leave melodizing on this wintry day,
 Shut up thine olden volume and be mute.
 Adieu ! for once again the fierce dispute
 Betwixt Hell torment and impassion'd Clay
 Must I burn through ; once more assay
 The bitter sweet of this Shakespearian fruit.
 Chief Poet ! and ye clouds of Albion,
 Begetters of our deep eternal theme,
 When I am through the old oak forest gone
 Let me not wander in a barren dream,
 But, when I am consumed with the Fire,
 Give me new Phoenix wings to fly at my desire.

So you see I am getting at it, with a sort of determination and strength, though verily I do not feel it at this moment—this is my fourth letter this morning, and I feel rather tired, and my head rather swimming—so I will leave it open till to-morrow's post.—

I am in the habit of taking my papers to Dilke's and copying there ; so I chat and proceed at the same time. I have been there at my work this evening, and the walk over the Heath³

¹ Thus there would seem to have been no fewer than three dramatic critics for the ‘*Champion*’ newspaper within a few weeks.

² It is boldly written in a large blank space in the 1808 folio. See Volume II, pages 191-2, foot-notes.

³ Presumably the walk from Wentworth Place to Well Walk.

takes off all sleep, so I will even proceed with you. I left off short in my last just as, I began an account of a private theatrical—Well it was of the lowest order, all greasy and oily, insomuch that if they had lived in olden times, when signs were hung over the doors, the only appropriate one for that oily place would have been—a guttered Candle. They played John Bull, The Review, and it was to conclude with Bombastes Furioso—I saw from a Box the 1st Act of John Bull, then went to Drury and did not return till it was over—when by Wells's interest we got behind the scenes—there was not a yard wide all the way round for actors, scene-shifters and interlopers to move in—for 'Nota Bene' the Green Room was under the stage, and there was I threatened over and over again to be turned out by the oily scene-shifters. There did I hear a little painted Trollop own, very candidly, that she had failed in Mary, with a "damned if she'd play a serious part again, as long as she lived," and at the same time she was habited as the Quaker in the Review.—There was a quarrel, and a fat good-natured looking girl in soldiers' clothes wished she had only been a man for Tom's sake. One fellow began a song, but an unlucky finger-point from the Gallery sent him off like a shot. One chap was dressed to kill for the King in Bombastes, and he stood at the edge of the scene in the very sweat of anxiety to show himself, but alas the thing was not played. The sweetest morsel of the night moreover was, that the musicians began pegging and fagging away—at an overture—never did you see faces more in earnest, three times did they play it over, dropping all kinds of correctness and still did not the curtain go up. Well when they went into a country-dance, then into a region they well knew, into the old boonsome Pothouse, and then to see how pompous o' the sudden they turned; how they looked about and chatted; how they did not care a damn; was a great treat.

I hope I have not tired you by this filling up of the dash in my last. Constable, the bookseller, has offered Reynolds ten guineas a sheet to write for his Magazine—it is an Edinburgh one, which Blackwood's started up in opposition to. Hunt said he was nearly sure that the "Cockney School" was written by Scott¹ so you are right, Tom!—There are no more little bits of news I can remember at present.

I remain,

My dear Brothers, your very affectionate brother
John.

¹ Mr. Dilke notes that it was written by Lockhart, "which is so close akin that it is by no means impossible that Scott encouraged the thing. That Lockhart was the writer was admitted to an American who published it on his return."

XXXIV.

To JOHN TAYLOR.

[*Postmark*, Hampstead, 30 January 1818.]

My dear Taylor,

These lines as they now stand about "happiness," have rung in my ears like "a chime a mending"—See here,

"Behold

Wherein lies happiness, Peona? fold, &c."

It appears to me the very contrary of blessed. I hope this will appear to you more eligible.

"Wherein lies happiness? In that which becks

Our ready minds to fellowship divine,

A fellowship with Essence till we shine

Full alchemized, and free of space—Behold

The clear religion of Heaven—fold, &c."

You must indulge me by putting this in, for setting aside the badness of the other, such a preface is necessary to the subject. The whole thing must, I think, have appeared to you, who are a consecutive man, as a thing almost of mere words, but I assure you that, when I wrote it, it was a regular stepping of the Imagination towards a truth. My having written that argument will perhaps be of the greatest service to me of anything I ever did. It set before me the gradations of happiness, even like a kind of pleasure thermometer, and is my first step towards the chief attempt in the drama. The playing of different natures with joy and Sorrow. Do me this favour, and believe me,

Your sincere friend,

J. Keats.

I hope your next work will be of a more general Interest. I suppose you cogitate a little about it now and then.

XXXV.

To JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS.

Hampstead,

Saturday [31 January 1818]

My dear Reynolds

I have parcell'd out this day for Letter Writing—more resolved thereon because your Letter will come as a refreshment and will have (*sic parvis* &c.) the same effect as a Kiss in certain

XXXIV. See 'Endymion', Book I (Volume I, page 97). As regards the postscript, see under 'Taylor and Hessey' in the Biographical Memoranda, *ante*.

XXXV. Lord Houghton says—"Keats passed the winter of 1817-18 at Hampstead, gaily enough among his friends; his society was much sought after, from

situations where people become over-generous. I have read this first sentence over, and think it savours rather; however an inward innocence is like a nested dove; or as the old song says—

O blush not so! O blush not so!

Or I shall think you knowing;
And if you smile the blushing while,
Then maidenheads are going.

There's a blush for won't, and a blush for shan't,
And a blush for having done it:
There's a blush for thought and a blush for nought,
And a blush for just begun it.

O sigh not so! O sigh not so!
For it sounds of Eve's sweet pippin;
By these loosen'd lips you have tasted the pips
And fought in an amorous nipping.

Will you play once more at nice-cut-core,
For it only will last our youth out,
And we have the prime of the kissing time,
We have not one sweet tooth out.

There's a sigh for yes, and a sigh for no,
And a sigh for I can't bear it!
O what can be done, shall we stay or run?
O cut the sweet apple and share it!

Now I purposed to write to you a serious poetical letter, but I find that a maxim I met with the other day is a just one: "On cause mieux quand on ne dit pas *causons*." I was hindered, however, from my first intention by a mere muslin Handkerchief very neatly pinned—but "Hence, vain deluding," &c.¹ Yet I cannot write in prose; it is a sunshiny day and I cannot, so here goes,—

Hence Burgundy, Claret, and Port,
Away with old Hock and Madeira,
Too earthly ye are for my sport;
There's a beverage brighter and clearer.
Instead of a pitiful rummer,

the delightful combination of earnestness and pleasantry which distinguished his intercourse with all men. There was no effort about him to say fine things, but he did say them most effectively, and they gained considerably by his happy transition of manner. He joked well or ill, as it happened, and with a laugh which still echoes sweetly in many ears; but at the mention of oppression or wrong, or at any calumny against those he loved, he rose into grave manliness at once, and seemed like a tall man. His habitual gentleness made his occasional looks of indignation almost terrible: on one occasion, when a gross falsehood respecting the young artist Severn was repeated and dwelt upon, he left the room, declaring 'he should be ashamed to sit with men who could utter and believe such things.'

¹ See line 1 of Milton's 'Il Penseroso.'

My wine overbrims a whole summer ;
 My bowl is the sky,
 And I drink at my eye,
 Till I feel in the brain
 A Delphian pain—
 Then follow, my Caius ! then follow :
 On the green of the hill
 We will drink our fill
 Of golden sunshine,
 Till our brains intertwine
 With the glory and grace of Apollo !
 God of the Meridian,
 And of the East and West,
 To thee my soul is flown,
 And my body is earthward press'd.—
 It is an awful mission,
 A terrible division ;
 And leaves a gulph austere
 To be fill'd with worldly fear.
 Aye, when the soul is fled
 To high above our head,
 Affrighted do we gaze
 After its airy maze,
 As doth a mother wild,
 When her young infant child
 Is in an eagle's claws—
 And is not this the cause
 Of madness?—God of Song,
 Thou bearest me along
 Through sights I scarce can bear :
 O let me, let me share
 With the hot lyre and thee,
 The staid Philosophy.
 Temper my lonely hours,
 And let me see thy bowers
 More unalarm'd !

My dear Reynolds, you must forgive all this ranting—but the fact is, I cannot write sense this Morning—however you shall have some—I will copy out my last Sonnet.

When I have fears that I may cease to be
 Before my pen has glean'd my teeming brain,
 Before high piled Books, in characterly,
 Hold like rich garnerers the full ripen'd grain—
 When I behold, upon the night's starr'd face,
 Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,
 And think that I may never live to trace
 Their shadows, with the magic hand of chance ;

And when I feel, fair creature of an hour,
 That I shall never look upon thee more,
 Never have relish in the faery power
 Of unreflecting Love ;—then on the shore
 Of the wide world I stand alone, and think
 Till Love and Fame to nothingness do sink.

I must take a turn, and then write to Teignmouth. Remember me to all, not excepting yourself.

Your sincere friend
 John Keats

XXXVI.

To JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS.

Hampstead, Tuesday [3 February 1818].

My dear Reynolds,

I thank you for your dish of Filberts—would I could get a basket of them by way of dessert every day for the sum of twopence.¹ Would we were a sort of ethereal Pigs, and turned loose to feed upon spiritual Mast and Acorns—which would be merely being a squirrel and feeding upon filberts, for what is a squirrel but an airy pig, or a filbert but a sort of archangelical acorn? About the nuts being worth cracking, all I can say is, that where there are a throng of delightful Images ready drawn, simplicity is the only thing. The first is the best on account of

¹ Two of the sonnets on Robin Hood, sent by the "twopenny post",—printed in 'The Yellow Dwarf' in 1818, and in 'The Garden of Florence' (1821). They are as follows :—

1.

Robin the outlaw! Is there not a mass
 Of freedom in the name?—It tells the story
 Of clenched oaks, with branches bow'd and hoary,
 Leaning in aged beauty o'er the grass ;—
 Of dazed smile on cheek of border lass
 Listening 'gainst some old gate at his strange glory :
 And of the dappled stag, struck down and gory,
 Lying with nostril wide in green morass.
 It tells a tale of forest days—of times
 That would have been most precious unto thee :
 Days of undying pastoral liberty :—
 Sweeter than music old of abbey chimes—
 Sweet as the virtue of Shakspearian rhymes—
 Days, shadowy with the magic green-wood tree!

2.

The trees in Sherwood forest are old and good,—
 The grass beneath them now is dimly green ;
 Are they deserted all? Is no young mien
 With loose-slung bugle met within the wood :

the first line, and the "arrow, foil'd of its antler'd food," and moreover (and this is the only word or two I find fault with, the more because I have had so much reason to shun it as a quicksand) the last has "tender and true". We must cut this, and not be rattlesnaked into any more of the like. It may be said that we ought to read our contemporaries, that Wordsworth &c. should have their due from us. But, for the sake of a few fine imaginative or domestic passages, are we to be bullied into a certain Philosophy engendered in the whims of an Egotist? Every man has his speculations, but every man does not brood and peacock over them till he makes a false coinage and deceives himself. Many a man can travel to the very bourne of Heaven, and yet want confidence to put down his half-seeing. Sancho will invent a Journey heavenward as well as anybody. We hate poetry that has a palpable design upon us, and, if we do not agree, seems to put its hand into its breeches pocket. Poetry should be great and unobtrusive, a thing which enters into one's soul, and does not startle or amaze it with itself, but with its subject. How beautiful are the retired flowers! how would they lose their beauty were they to throng into the highway, crying out, "Admire me, I am a violet! Dote upon me, I am a primrose!" Modern poets differ from the Eliza-

No arrow found,—foil'd of its antler'd food,—
Struck in the oak's rude side? Is there nought seen,
To mark the revelries which there have been,—
In the sweet days of merry Robin Hood?

Go there, with Summer, and with evening,—go
In the soft shadows like some wandering man,—
And thou shalt far amid the forest know
The archer men in green, with belt and bow,
Feasting on pheasant, river-fowl, and swan,
With Robin at their head, and Marian.

3.

With coat of Lincoln green and mantle too,
And horn of ivory mouth, and buckle bright,
And arrows wing'd with peacock-feathers light,
And trusty bow well gather'd of the yew,—
Stands Robin Hood :—and near, with eyes of blue
Shining through dusk hair, like the stars of night,
And habited in pretty forest plight,—
His green-wood beauty sits, young as the dew.
Oh gentle-tressed girl! Maid Marian!
Are thine eyes bent upon the gallant game
That stray in the merry Sherwood : thy sweet fame
Can never, never die. And thou, high man,
Would we might pledge thee with thy silver Can
Of Rhenish, in the woods of Nottingham!

No. 1 appears to have been an after-thought. The 'tender and true' gave place to 'young as the dew' in line 8 of the last sonnet, on revision.

bethans in this : each of the moderns like an Elector of Hanover governs his petty state, and knows how many straws are swept daily from the Causeways in all his dominions, and has a continual itching that all the Housewives should have their coppers well scoured. The ancients were Emperors of vast Provinces, they had only heard of the remote ones and scarcely cared to visit them. I will cut all this—I will have no more of Wordsworth or Hunt in particular. Why should we be of the tribe of Manasseh, when we can wander with Esau? Why should we kick against the Pricks, when we can walk on Roses? Why should we be owls, when we can be eagles? Why be teased with “nice-eyed wagtails,” when we have in sight “the Cherub Contemplation?” Why with Wordsworth’s “Matthew with a bough of wilding in his hand,” when we can have Jacques “under an oak,” &c.? The secret of the Bough of Wilding will run through your head faster than I can write it. Old Matthew spoke to him some years ago on some nothing, and because he happens in an Evening Walk to imagine the figure of the old Man, he must stamp it down in black and white, and it is henceforth sacred. I don’t mean to deny Wordsworth’s grandeur and Hunt’s merit, but I mean to say we need not be teased with grandeur and merit when we can have them uncontaminated and unobtrusive.¹ Let us have the old Poets and Robin Hood. Your letter and its sonnets gave me more pleasure than will the Fourth Book of “Childe Harold” and the whole of anybody’s life and opinions. In return for your dish of filberts, I have gathered a few catkins. I hope they’ll look pretty.

To J. H. R. in Answer to his Robin Hood Sonnets.

No! those days are gone away,
 And their hours are old and gray,
 And their minutes buried all
 Under the down-trodden pall
 Of the leaves of many years :
 Many times have Winter’s shears,
 Frozen North and chilling East,

¹ Lord Houghton comments on this passage thus :—“Keats was perhaps unconsciously swayed in his estimate of Wordsworth at this moment, by an incident which had occurred at Mr. Haydon’s. The young Poet had been induced to repeat to the elder the fine ‘Hymn to Pan,’ out of ‘Endymion,’ which Shelley, who did not much like the poem, used to speak of as affording the ‘surest promise of ultimate excellence;’ Wordsworth only remarked, ‘it was a pretty piece of Paganism.’ The mature and philosophic genius, penetrated with Christian associations, probably intended some slight rebuke to his youthful compeer, whom he saw absorbed in an order of ideas, that to him appeared merely sensuous, and would have desired that the bright traits of Greek mythology should be sobered down by a graver faith, as in his own ‘Dion’ and ‘Laodamia.’”

Sounded tempests to the feast
Of the forest's whispering fleeces,
Since men paid no rent and Leases.

No ! the Bugle sounds no more,
And the twanging bow no more ;
Silent is the ivory shrill
Past the heath and up the Hill ;
There is no mid-forest laugh,
Where lone Echo gives the half
To some wight, amaz'd to hear
Jesting, deep in forest drear.

On the fairest time of June
You may go with Sun or Moon,
Or the seven stars to light you,
Or the polar ray to right you ;
But you never may behold
Little John or Robin bold ;
Never one, of all the clan,
Thrumming on an empty can
Some old hunting ditty, while
He doth his green way beguile
To fair Hostess Merriment
Down beside the pasture Trent,
For he left the merry tale
Messenger for spicy ale.

Gone the merry morris din,
Gone the song of Gamelyn,
Gone the tough-belted outlaw
Idling in the "grenè shawe":
All are gone away and past !
And if Robin *should* be cast
Sudden from his turfed grave,
And if Marian *should* have
Once again her forest days,
She would weep, and he would craze :
He would swear, for all his oaks,
Fall'n beneath the Dock-yard strokes,
Have rotted on the briny seas ;
She would weep that her wild bees
Sang not to her—"strange that honey
Can't be got without hard money."

So it is ! yet let us sing,
Honour to the old bow-string,
Honour to the bugle-horn,
Honour to the woods unshorn,
Honour to the Lincoln green,

Honour to the archer keen,
 Honour to tight little John,
 And the horse he rode upon :
 Honour to bold Robin Hood,
 Sleeping in the underwood !
 Honour to maid Marian,
 And to all the Sherwood clan—
 Though their days have hurried by
 Let us two a burden try.

I hope you will like them—they are at least written in the spirit of outlawry. Here are the Mermaid lines.

Souls of Poets dead and gone,
 What Elysium have ye known,
 Happy field or mossy cavern,
 Fairer than the Mermaid Tavern ?

Have ye tippled drink more fine
 Than mine host's Canary wine ?
 Or are fruits of Paradise
 Sweeter than those dainty pies
 Of Venison ? O generous food
 Drest as though bold Robin Hood
 Would, with his Maid Marian,
 Sup and bowse from horn and can.

I have heard that on a day
 Mine host's sign-board flew away,
 Nobody knew whither, till
 An astrologer's old Quill
 To a sheepskin gave the story,
 Said he saw you in your glory,
 Underneath a new old-sign
 Sipping beverage divine,
 And pledging with contented smack
 The Mermaid in the Zodiac.

Souls of Poets dead and gone,
 Are the winds a sweeter home,
 Richer is uncellar'd cavern
 Than the merry Mermaid Tavern ?

I will call on you at 4 to-morrow and we will trudge together for it is not the thing to be a stranger in the Land of Harpsicols. I hope also to bring you my 2^d Book.¹ In the hope that these scribblings will be some amusement for you this evening, I remain, copying on the Hill,

Your sincere friend and Co-scribbler,
 John Keats.

¹ Of 'Endymion.'

XXXVII.

To JOHN TAYLOR.

Fleet St. Thursd: Morn.
[5 February 1818.]

My dear Taylor,

I have finished copying my 2^d Book¹—but I want it for one day to overlook it. And moreover this day I have very particular employ in the affair of Cripps—so I trespass on your indulgence, and take advantage of your goodnature. You shall hear from me or see me soon. I will tell Reynolds of your engagement to-morrow.

yrs unfeignedly,
John Keats.

XXXVIII.

To GEORGE AND THOMAS KEATS.

Teignmouth.

Hampstead,
16 February [1818].

My dear Brothers,

When once a man delays a letter beyond the proper time, he delays it longer, for one or two reasons—first, because he must begin in a very common-place style, that is to say, with an excuse; and secondly things and circumstances become so jumbled in his mind, that he knows not what, or what not, he has said in his last. I shall visit you as soon as I have copied my Poem all out. I am now much beforehand with the printers: they have done none yet, and I am half afraid they will let half the season by before the printing. I am determined they shall not trouble me when I have copied it all. Horace Smith has lent me his manuscript called “Nehemiah Muggs, an exposure of the Methodists”—perhaps I may send you a few extracts.

¹ Of ‘Endymion.’

XXXVIII. While Keats was busy copying ‘Endymion’ for the printers, he took the relaxation of reading a manuscript satire by Horace Smith, lent by the author, but never, as far as I can learn, published. His daughter, still living, can tell me nothing about ‘Nehemiah Muggs’. Dr. Garnett, alluding to this passage in his article on Horatio Smith in the ‘Dictionary of National Biography,’ says that the satire “does not appear to have been published.” So far I have been unable to ascertain that it has. It is not surprising that the first-night performance of ‘Fazio,’ by the Rev. Henry Milman, better known as Dean Milman, hung heavily on Keats. Whether he made the acquaintance of Dr. Wolcot (‘Peter Pindar’) and Mrs. Opie, I do not know. Of Mrs. Scott, he did. She was, I believe, the dark-eyed widow whom Haydon married. Coleridge’s friend who called on Keats was of course Henry Crabb Robinson; but I do not find in his published diary any mention of the visit.

Hazlitt's last lecture was on Thomson, Cowper, and Crabbe. He praised Thomson and Cowper, but he gave Crabbe an unmerciful licking. I think Hunt's article of Fazio—no it was not, but I saw Fazio the first night, it hung rather heavily on me. I am in the high way of being introduced to a squad of people, Peter Pindar, Mrs. Opie, Mrs. Scott—Mr. Robinson, a great friend of Coleridge's, called on me. Richards tells me that my Poems are known in the west country, and that he saw a very clever copy of verses, headed with a Motto from my Sonnet to George—Honours rush so thickly upon me that I shall not be able to bear up against them. What think you—am I to be crowned in the Capitol, am I to be made a Mandarin—No! I am to be invited, Mrs. Hunt tells me, to a party at Ollier's, to keep Shakespeare's birthday—Shakespeare would stare to see me there.¹ The Wednesday before last Shelley, Hunt and I wrote each a Sonnet on the River Nile, some day you shall read them all.² I saw a sheet of "Endymion," and have all reason to suppose they will soon get it done, there shall be nothing wanting on my part. I have been writing at intervals many songs and Sonnets, and I long to be at Teignmouth, to read them over to you; however I think I had better wait till this Book is off my mind; it will not be long first.

Reynolds has been writing two very capital articles in the "Yellow Dwarf," on Popular Preachers. All the talk here is about Dr. Croft, the Duke of Devon etc.³

Your most affectionate brother

John

¹ Shakespeare's reason for staring may be found in the letter from Messrs. Ollier to George Keats, given at page 4 in Volume I.

² See Volume II, pages 195-6.

³ Three days before the date of this letter London had been horrified by the tragic termination of the career of a man of some eminence in his profession: Sir Richard Croft, Bart., who had attended the Princess Charlotte in the previous November, at the fatal birth of her child, shot himself at a house in Wimpole Street at which he was attending another midwifery case, that of the wife of the Rev. George Thackeray, D.D., Provost of King's College, Cambridge. Croft had succeeded to the Baronetcy on the 25th of April 1816 on the decease of his elder brother, the Rev. Sir Herbert Croft, of Dunston Park in Berkshire, known in the world of letters by that eccentric book 'Love and Madness,' in which he had so strangely mingled poems by and *data* concerning Thomas Chatterton, gathered at Bristol from the Poet's mother and sister, with another *cause célèbre*—the murder of Miss Reay the actress by a clergyman named Hackman, from motives of jealousy. Sir Richard Croft, born in 1762, married the elder of the twin daughters of Dr. Denman, the leading accoucheur of his day. Croft attended the Duchess of Devonshire and other ladies of position, and in due time came into Denman's practice. When he was chosen to attend the popular Princess Charlotte, and "lost his case," the public excitement took to some extent the form of clamour against Croft. The 'Dictionary of National Biography' takes upon itself to say—"That Croft was not too skilful and rather self-confident appears evident." 'The Gentleman's Magazine' gave a full account of the matter at the time, and attri-

XXXIX.

To JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS.

[*Postmark*, Hampstead, 19 February, 1818.]

My dear Reynolds,

I had an idea that a Man might pass a very pleasant life in this manner—let him on a certain day read a certain Page of full Poesy or distilled Prose, and let him wander with it, and muse upon it, and reflect upon it, and bring home to it, and prophesy upon it, and dream upon it, until it becomes stale—but when will it do so? Never. When Man has arrived at a certain ripeness in intellect any one grand and spiritual passage serves him as a starting-post towards all “the two-and-thirty Palaces.” How happy is such a voyage of conception, what delicious diligent Indolence! A doze upon a sofa does not hinder it, and a nap upon Clover engenders ethereal finger-pointings—the prattle of a child gives it wings, and the converse of middle-age a strength to beat them—a strain of music conducts to “an odd angle of the Isle,” and when the leaves whisper it puts a girdle round the earth.¹ Nor will this sparing touch of noble Books be any irreverence to their Writers—for perhaps the honours paid by Man to Man are trifles in comparison to the Benefit done by great Works to the “Spirit and pulse” of good by their mere passive existence. Memory should not be called Knowledge. Many have original minds who do not think it—they are led away by Custom. Now it appears to me that almost any Man may like the spider spin from his own

buted no blame to Croft, but said “all had been done that human science could suggest or human skill effect.” The Prince Regent and the widowed Prince Leopold caused letters to be sent to Croft in November 1817, expressing “entire approbation of the medical skill and ability displayed by that gentleman” and adding that “the afflicting result was to be attributed only to the inscrutable will of Divine Providence.” Nevertheless, the death of his royal patient preyed on Croft’s mind; and it was unfortunate that Dr. Thackeray, in view of recent robberies in the neighbourhood of Wimpole Street, had placed pistols in the room which his wife’s medical attendant occupied. The magazine quoted above, in a memoir of the deceased accoucheur, says that he was sent to Paris, to attend Georgiana Duchess of Devonshire, “when she was brought to bed of the present Duke.” The suicide of the unfortunate Baronet seems to have been the signal for the revival of what ‘The Gentleman’s Magazine’ characterizes as “a most foul calumny against the memory of the Duchess and of Mr. Croft.” According to that evil report, the Duchess bore a girl and changed babies with a noble female friend who was brought to bed of a boy at the same time. It appears, however, that persons of respectability and character alive in 1818 were present when the sixth Duke of Devonshire was born, and were prepared to swear that he really was born a boy and that the lady accused of trading him off for a Cavendish girl was not at that time with child. The wicked story revived in 1818 was what Keats would doubtless have followed Stephano in calling “a very scurvy tune to sing at a man’s funeral.”

¹ See again ‘The Tempest,’ Act I, Scene ii, and ‘A Midsummer Night’s Dream,’ Act II, Scene ii.

inwards his own airy Citadel—the points of leaves and twigs on which the spider begins her work are few, and she fills the air with a beautiful circuiting. Man should be content with as few points to tip with the fine Web of his Soul, and weave a tapestry empyrean full of symbols for his spiritual eye, of softness for his spiritual touch, of space for his wandering, of distinctness for his luxury. But the Minds of Mortals are so different and bent on such diverse journeys that it may at first appear impossible for any common taste and fellowship to exist between two or three under these suppositions. It is however quite the contrary. Minds would leave each other in contrary directions, traverse each other in numberless points, and at last greet each other at the journey's end. An old Man and a child would talk together and the old Man be led on his path and the child left thinking. Man should not dispute or assert but whisper results to his neighbour and thus by every germ of spirit sucking the sap from mould ethereal every human¹ might become great, and Humanity instead of being a wide heath of Furze and Briars with here and there a remote Oak or Pine, would become a grand democracy of Forest Trees! It has been an old comparison for our urging on—the Beehive; however, it seems to me that we should rather be the flower than the Bee—for it is a false notion that more is gained by receiving than giving—no, the receiver and the giver are equal in their benefits. The flower, I doubt not, receives a fair guerdon from the Bee—its leaves blush deeper in the next spring—and who shall say between Man and Woman which is the most delighted? Now it is more noble to sit like Jove than to fly like Mercury—let us not therefore go hurrying about and collecting honey, bee-like buzzing here and there impatiently from a knowledge of what is to be aimed at; but let us open our leaves like a flower and be passive and receptive—budding patiently under the eye of Apollo and taking hints from every noble insect that favours us with a visit—sap will be given us for meat and dew for drink. I was led into these thoughts, my dear Reynolds, by the beauty of the morning operating on a sense of Idleness—I have not read any Books—the Morning said I was right—I had no idea but of the morning, and the thrush said I was right—seeming to say,

O thou whose face hath felt the Winter's wind,
Whose eye has seen the snow-clouds hung in mist,
And the black elm-tops 'mong the freezing stars,
To thee the Spring will be a harvest-time.
O thou, whose only book has been the light
Of supreme darkness which thou feddest on

¹ Keats may have used this adjective as a noun; or he may have left out the word *being* accidentally.

Night after night when Phœbus was away,
 To thee the Spring shall be a triple morn.
 O fret not after knowledge—I have none,
 And yet my song comes native with the warmth.
 O fret not after knowledge—I have none,
 And yet the Evening listens. He who saddens
 At thought of idleness cannot be idle,
 And he's awake who thinks himself asleep.

Now I am sensible all this is a mere sophistication (however it may neighbour to any truths), to excuse my own indolence—so I will not deceive myself that Man should be equal with Jove—but think himself very well off as a sort of scullion-Mercury, or even a humble Bee. It is no matter whether I am right or wrong, either one way or another, if there is sufficient to lift a little time from your shoulders.

Your affectionate friend
 John Keats—

XL.

To HORACE SMITH.

Knightsbridge.

Hampstead, Thursd. Morn.

[19 February 1818.]

My dear Sir

My Brothers are expecting me every day in Devonshire, and I have some days work before I can go thither: so I am hardy enough to nullify the day I had expected to pass with you, and trespassing enough to ask your indulgence therefore—I am being greatly amused with your Poem—it has a full le[a]ven of Wit and imaginative fun. I thank you for it now and will return it to Reynolds. Remember me to Shelley and Kingston. Yours very sincerely

John Keats

XLI.

To GEORGE AND THOMAS KEATS.

Teignmouth.

Hampstead,

Saturday [21 February 1818].

My dear Brothers,

I am extremely sorry to have given you so much uneasiness by not writing; however, you know good news is no news or vice versâ. I do not like to write a short letter to you, or you would have had one long before. The weather although boisterous to-day has been very much milder; and I think

XL. The poem referred to in this letter was called 'Nehemiah Muggs.' See page 75 *ante*.

Devonshire is not the last place to receive a temperate Change. I have been abominably idle since you left, but have just turned over a new leaf, and used as a marker a letter of excuse to an invitation from Horace Smith. The occasion of my writing to-day is the enclosed letter—by Postmark from Miss W[ylie]. Does she expect you in town George? I received a letter the other day from Haydon, in which he says, his *Essays on the Elgin Marbles* are being translated into Italian, the which he superintends. I did not mention that I had seen the British Gallery; there are some nice things by Stark, and “*Bathsheba*” by Wilkie, which is condemned. I could not bear Alston’s “*Uriel*.”

Reynolds has been very ill for some time, confined to the house, and had leeches applied to his chest; when I saw him on Wednesday he was much the same, and he is in the worst place for amendment, among the strife of women’s tongues, in a hot and parch’d room: I wish he would move to Butler’s for a short time. The Thrushes and Blackbirds have been singing me into an idea that it was Spring, and almost that leaves were on the trees. So that black clouds and boisterous winds seem to have mustered and collected in full Divan, for the purpose of convincing me to the contrary. Taylor says my poem shall be out in a month, I think he will be out before it.¹ * * *

The thrushes are singing now as if they would speak to the winds, because their big brother Jack—the Spring—was not far off. I am reading Voltaire and Gibbon, although I wrote to Reynolds the other day to prove reading of no use; I have not seen Hunt since. I am a good deal with Dilke and Brown; we are very thick; they are very kind to me, they are well; I don’t think I could stop in Hampstead but for their neighbourhood. I hear Hazlitt’s lectures regularly, his last was on Gray, Collins, Young, &c., and he gave a very fine piece of discriminating Criticism on Swift, Voltaire, and Rabelais. I was very disappointed at his treatment of Chatterton. I generally meet with many I know there. Lord Byron’s 4th Canto is expected out, and I heard somewhere, that Walter Scott has a new Poem in readiness. I am sorry that Wordsworth has left a bad impression wherever he visited in town by his egotism, Vanity and bigotry. Yet he is a great poet if not a philosopher. I have not yet read Shelley’s Poem, I do not suppose you have it yet, at the Teignmouth libraries. These double letters must come rather heavy, I hope you have a moderate portion of cash, but don’t fret at all, if you have not—Lord! I intend to play at cut and run as well as Falstaff, that is to say, before he got so lusty.

I remain praying for your health my dear Brothers

Your affectionate Brother

John.

¹ See page 67 and Biographical Memoranda, *ante*.

XLII.

To JOHN TAYLOR.

Hampstead,

27 February [1818].

My dear Taylor,

Your alteration strikes me as being a great improvement. And now I will attend to the punctuations you speak of. The comma should be at *soberly*, and in the other passage the comma should follow *quiet*. I am extremely indebted to you for this alteration, and also for your after admonitions. It is a sorry thing for me that any one should have to overcome prejudices in reading my verses—that affects me more than any hypercriticism on any particular passage. In “Endymion,” I have most likely but moved into the go-cart from the leading-strings. In poetry I have a few axioms, and you will see how far I am from their centre.

1st. I think poetry should surprise by a fine excess, and not by singularity; it should strike the reader as a wording of his own highest thoughts, and appear almost a remembrance.

2nd. Its touches of beauty should never be half-way, thereby making the reader breathless, instead of content. The rise, the progress, the setting of Imagery should, like the sun, come natural to him, shine over him, and set soberly, although in magnificence, leaving him in the luxury of twilight. But it is easier to think what poetry should be, than to write it. And this leads me to

Another axiom—That if poetry comes not as naturally as the leaves to a tree, it had better not come at all.—However it may be with me, I cannot help looking into new countries with “O for a muse of Fire to ascend!” If “Endymion” serves me as a pioneer, perhaps I ought to be content—I have great reason to be content, for thank God I can read, and perhaps understand Shakespeare to his depths; and I have I am sure many friends, who, if I fail, will attribute any change in my life and temper to humbleness rather than pride—to a cowering under the wings of great poets, rather than to a bitterness that I am not appreciated.¹ I am anxious to get “Endymion” printed that

¹ Bailey informed Lord Houghton, “that one of Keats’s favourite topics of conversation was the principle of melody in verse, which he believed to consist in the adroit management of open and close vowels. He had a theory that vowels could be as skilfully combined and interchanged as differing notes of music, and that all sense of monotony was to be avoided, except when expressive of a special purpose. Uniformity of metre is so much the rule of English poetry, that, undoubtedly, the carefully varied harmonies of Keats’s verse were disagreeable, even to cultivated readers, often producing exactly the contrary impression from what was intended, and, combined as they were with rare and curious rhymes, diverted the attention from the beauty of the thoughts and the force of the imagery. In ‘Endymion,’

I may forget it and proceed. I have copied the 3rd Book and begun the 4th. On running my eye over the proofs, I saw one mistake—I will notice it presently, and also any others, if there be any. There should be no comma in “the raft branch down sweeping from a tall ash-top.” I have besides made one or two alterations and also altered the 13th line p. 32 to make sense of it, as you will see. I will take care the printer shall not trip up my heels. There should be no dash after Dryope, in the line “Dryope’s lone lulling of her child.”

Remember me to Percy Street.

Your sincere and obliged friend

John Keats

P.S.—You shall have a short preface in good time.

XLIII.

To MESSRS. TAYLOR AND HESSEY.

My dear Sirs,

[February or March 1818.]

I am this morning making a general clearance of all lent Books—all—I am afraid I do not return all—I must fog your memories about them—however with many thanks here are the remainder—which I am afraid are not worth so much now as they were six months ago—I mean the fashions may have changed—

Yours truly

John Keats

XLIV.

To BENJAMIN BAILEY.

Oxford.

My dear Bailey,

Teignmouth,

Friday [13 March 1818.]

When a poor devil is drowning, it is said he comes thrice to the surface ere he makes his final sink—if however even at

indeed, there was much which not only seemed, but was, experimental; and it is impossible not to observe the superior mastery of melody, and sure-footedness of the poetic paces, in ‘Hyperion.’”

XLIV. This letter appeared in the Library edition with the place and date assigned to it by Lord Houghton, “Teignmouth, September 1818,” although I expressed some doubt as to the correctness of the date. Mr. Colvin shows in his *Men of Letters ‘Keats’* that the true date is Friday the 13th of March 1818; and thus the supposition that Keats and his brother Tom made two journeys to Teignmouth in 1818, one in the spring and one in the autumn, falls to the ground. Mr. Colvin traces the mistake in the date back to Woodhouse,—whose exactness in such matters might well impose upon Lord Houghton. My reasons for doubting his Lordship’s date are adduced by Mr. Colvin as proof of its incorrectness; but the real proof appears to have been found among Lord Houghton’s papers.

the third rise he can manage to catch hold of a piece of weed or rock he stands a fair chance, as I hope I do now, of being saved. I have sunk twice in our correspondence, have risen twice, and have been too idle, or something worse, to extricate myself. I have sunk the third time, and just now risen again at two of the Clock P.M., and saved myself from utter perdition by beginning this, all drenched as I am, and fresh from the water. And I would rather endure the present inconvenience of a wet jacket than you should keep a laced one in store for me. Why did I not stop at Oxford in my way? How can you ask such a question? Why, did I not promise to do so? Did I not, in a letter to you, make a promise to do so? Then how can you be so unreasonable as to ask me why I did not? This is the thing—(for I have been rubbing up my Invention—trying several sleights—I first polished a cold, felt it in my fingers, tried it on the table, but could not pocket it:—I tried Chillblains, Rheumatism, Gout, tight boots—nothing of that sort would do,—so this is, as I was going to say, the thing)—I had a letter from Tom, saying how much better he had got, and thinking he had better stop—I went down to prevent his coming up. Will not this do? Turn it which way you like—it is selvaged all round. I have used it, these three last days, to keep out the abominable Devonshire weather. By the by, you may say what you will of Devonshire: the truth is, it is a splashy, rainy, misty, snowy, foggy, haily, floody, muddy, slipshod county. The hills are very beautiful, when you get a sight of 'em—the primroses are out, but then you are in—the Cliffs are of a fine deep colour, but then the Clouds are continually vieing with them—the women like your London people in a sort of negative way—because the native men are the poorest creatures in England—because Government never have thought it worth while to send a recruiting party among them. When I think of Wordsworth's Sonnet, "Vanguard of Liberty! ye men of Kent!" the degenerated race about me are *Pulvis ipecac. simplex*—a strong dose. Were I a corsair, I'd make a descent on the south coast of Devon; if I did not run the chance of having Cowardice imputed to me. As for the men, they'd run away into the Methodist meeting-houses, and the women would be glad of it. Had England been a large Devonshire, we should not have won the Battle of Waterloo. There are knotted oaks, there are lusty rivulets, there are meadows such as are not elsewhere,—there are valleys of feminine climate—but there are no thews and sinews—Moore's Almanack is here a Curiosity—Arms, neck, and shoulders may at least be seen there, and the ladies read it as some out-of-the-way Romance. Such a quelling Power have these thoughts over me that I fancy the very air of a deteriorating quality. I fancy the flowers, all precocious, have an Acrasian spell about them—I feel able to beat off the Devon-

shire waves like soap-froth. I think it well for the honour of Britain that Julius Cæsar did not first land in this County. A Devonshirer standing on his native hills is not a distinct object—he does not show against the light—a wolf or two would dispossess him. I like, I love England—I like its living men—give me a long brown plain for my money, so I may meet with some of Edmund Ironside's descendants. Give me a barren mould, so I may meet with some shadowing of Alfred in the shape of a Gipsy, a huntsman, or a shepherd. Scenery is fine—but human nature is finer—the sward is richer for the tread of a real nervous English foot—the Eagle's nest is finer, for the Mountaineer has looked into it. Are these facts or prejudices? Whatever they be, for them I shall never be able to relish entirely any Devonshire scenery. Homer is fine, Achilles is fine, Diomed is fine, Shakspeare is fine—Hamlet is fine, Lear is fine—but dwindled Englishmen are not fine. Where too the women are so passable, and have such English names, such as Ophelia, Cordelia &c., that they should have such Paramours or rather Imparamours! As for them, I cannot in thought help wishing, as did the cruel emperor, that they had but one head, and I might cut it off to deliver them from any horrible Courtesy they may do their undeserving countrymen. I wonder I meet with no born monsters—O Devonshire, last night I thought the moon had dwindled in heaven—

I have never had your Sermon from Wordsworth, but Mr. Dilke lent it me. You know my ideas about Religion. I do not think myself more in the right than other people, and that nothing in this world is proveable. I wish I could enter into all your feelings on the subject, merely for one short 10 minutes, and give you a page or two to your liking. I am sometimes so very sceptical as to think Poetry itself a mere Jack o' Lantern to amuse whoever may chance to be struck with its brilliance. As tradesmen say every thing is worth what it will fetch, so probably every mental pursuit takes its reality and worth from the ardour of the pursuer—being in itself a Nothing. Ethereal things may at least be thus real, divided under three heads—Things real—things semi-real—and nothings. Things real, such as existences of Sun, moon, and Stars—and passages of Shakespeare.—Things semi-real, such as love, the Clouds, &c., which require a greeting of the Spirit to make them wholly exist—and Nothings, which are made great and dignified by an ardent pursuit—which, by the by, stamp the Burgundy mark on the bottles of our minds, inasmuch as they are able to "*consecrate what'er they look upon.*" I have written a sonnet here of a somewhat collateral nature—so don't imagine it an "*apropos des bottles*"—

Four Seasons fill the measure of the year ;

There are four seasons in the mind of Man :

He hath his lusty Spring, when Fancy clear
 Takes in all beauty with an easy span :
 He has his Summer, when luxuriously
 He chews the honied cud of fair Spring thoughts,
 Till in his Soul, dissolv'd, they come to be
 Part of himself : He hath his Autumn Ports
 And havens of repose when his tired wings
 Are folded up, and he content to look
 On Mists in idleness—to let fair things
 Pass by unheeded as a threshold brook.
 He has his Winter too of Pale misfeature,
 Or else he would forego his mortal nature.

Aye, this may be carried—but what am I talking of?—it is an old maxim of mine, and of course must be well known, that every point of thought is the Centre of an intellectual world. The two uppermost thoughts in a Man's mind are the two poles of his world—he revolves on them, and every thing is Southward or Northward to him through their means.—We take but three steps from feathers to iron.—Now, my dear fellow, I must once for all tell you I have not one idea of the truth of any of my speculations—I shall never be a reasoner, because I care not to be in the right, when retired from bickering and in a proper philosophical temper. So you must not stare if in any future letter, I endeavour to prove that Apollo, as he had catgut strings to his lyre, used a cat's paw as a pecten—and further from said Pecten's reiterated and continual teasing came the term *hen-pecked*. My Brother Tom desires to be remembered to you ; he has just this moment had a spitting of blood, poor fellow—Remember me to Gleig¹ and Whitehead.

Your affectionate friend

John Keats

XLV.

To JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS.

Teignmouth,
 Saturday [14 March 1818].

Dear Reynolds,

I escaped being blown over and blown under and trees and house being toppled on me.—I have, since hearing of Brown's accident had an aversion to a dose of parapet, and being also a lover of antiquities I would sooner have a harmless piece of Herculaneum sent me quietly as a present than ever so

¹ In the 'Life, Letters' &c. (1848), 'Grey': in the 'Life and Letters' (1867), 'Greig'; but I presume there is no doubt that the reference is to the Rev. George Robert Gleig. See page 39 of this volume.

modern a chimney-pot tumbled on to my head.¹ Being agog to see some Devonshire, I would have taken a walk the first day, but the rain would not let me ; and the second, but the rain would not let me ; and the third, but the rain forbade it. Ditto 4—ditto 5—ditto—so I made up my Mind to stop in-doors, and catch a sight flying between the showers : and, behold I saw a pretty valley—pretty cliffs, pretty Brooks, pretty Meadows, pretty trees, both standing as they were created, and blown down as they are uncreated. The green is beautiful, as they say, and pity it is that it is amphibious—*mais!* but alas! the flowers here wait as naturally for the rain twice a day as the Mussels do for the Tide ; so we look upon a brook in these parts as you look upon a splash in your Country. There must be something to support this—aye, fog, hail, snow, rain, Mist blanketing up three parts of the year. This Devonshire is like Lydia Languish, very entertaining when it smiles, but cursedly subject to sympathetic moisture. You have the sensation of walking under one great Lamp-lighter : and you can't go on the other side of the ladder to keep your frock clean, and cosset your superstition. Buy a girdle—put a pebble in your mouth—loosen your braces—for I am going among scenery whence I intend to tip you the Damosel Radcliffe²—I'll cavern you, and grotto you, and waterfall you, and wood you, and water you, and immense-rock you, and tremendous-sound you, and solitude you. I'll make a lodgment on your glaxis by a row of Pines, and storm your covered way with bramble Bushes. I'll have at you with hip and haw snail-shot, and cannonade you with Shingles—I'll be witty upon salt-fish,³ and impede your cavalry with clotted cream. But ah Coward! to talk at this rate to a sick man, or, I hope, to one that was sick—for I hope by this you stand on your right foot. If you are not—that's all,—I intend to cut all sick people if they do not make up their minds to cut Sickness—a fellow to whom I have a complete aversion, and who strange to say is harboured and countenanced in several houses where I visit—he is sitting now quite impudent

¹ Mr. Dilke says "This alludes to an accident which befell Brown many years before and which must have been about that time first mentioned to Keats and Reynolds. A parapet stone fell and struck Brown on the *calf of the leg*—a narrower escape a man could not well have. Apparently no great harm done—but it got worse and worse and it was doubtful at last whether he would not have lost the limb. This was years before he knew either Keats or Reynolds."

² Why Mrs. Radcliffe should be thus shorn of her matronly dignity one cannot guess : in another place Keats scarcely magnifies the dignity of maternity by alluding to her as "Mother Radcliffe." The stock in trade of 'The Romance of the Forest' looks curious beside the ensuing reminiscence of Uncle Toby and Corporal Trim.

³ Teignmouth used to have a considerable trade in dried cod from Newfoundland—called locally "salt fish."

between me and Tom—he insults me at poor Jem Rice’s—and you have seated him before now between us at the Theatre, when I thought he looked with a longing eye at poor Kean. I shall say, once for all, to my friends, generally and severally, cut that fellow, or I cut you.

I went to the Theatre here the other night, which I forgot to tell George, and got insulted, which I ought to remember to forget to tell any Body ; for I did not fight, and as yet have had no redress—“Lie thou there, sweetheart !”¹ I wrote to Bailey yesterday, obliged to speak in a high way, and a damme who’s afraid—for I had owed him so long ; however, he shall see I will be better in future. Is he in town yet ? I have directed to Oxford as the better chance. I have copied my Fourth Book, and shall write the Preface soon. I wish it was all done ; for I want to forget it, and make my mind free for something new. Atkins the coachman, Bartlett the surgeon, Simmons² the Barber, and the Girls over at the Bonnet-shop, say we shall now have a month of seasonable weather—warm, witty, and full of invention. Write to me and tell me that you are well or thereabouts, or by the holy Beaucoeur, which I suppose is the Virgin Mary, or the repented Magdalen (beautiful name, that Magdalen), I’ll take to my Wings and fly away to anywhere but old or Nova Scotia. I wish I had a little innocent bit of Metaphysic in my head, to criss-cross the letter ; but you know a favourite tune is hardest to be remembered when one wants it most and you, I know, have long ere this taken it for granted that I never have any speculations without associating you in them, where they are of a pleasant nature, and you know enough of me to tell the places where I haunt most, so that if you think for five minutes after having read this, you will find it a long letter, and see written in the Air before you,

Your most affectionate friend

John Keats.

Remember me to all. Tom’s remembrances to you.

¹ See ‘The Second Part of King Henry the Fourth,’ Act II, Scene iv, where Ancient Pistol calls for a drink and divests himself of his sword :—

Give me some Sack : and Sweet-heart lye thou there.

² Probably these are all the names of real inhabitants. Mr. Bartlett, at all events, I well remember as the senior medical practitioner of the place in 1850 and onwards. His name occurs in the list of subscribers for copies of ‘Poems by Mrs. I. S. Prowse.’ See Biographical Memoranda prefixed to the present volume in the section headed ‘The Jeffreys of Teignmouth.’

XLVI.

To BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON.

Teignmouth,
Saturday Morn.

[Postmark, 23 March 1818.]

My dear Haydon,

In sooth, I hope you are not too sanguine about that seal¹—in sooth I hope it is not Brumidgeum—in double sooth I hope it is his—and in triple sooth I hope I shall have an impression. Such a piece of intelligence came doubly welcome to me while in your own County and in your own hand—not but I have blown up the said County for its urinal qualifications—the six first days I was here it did nothing but rain; and at that time having to write to a friend I gave Devonshire a good blowing up—it has been fine for almost three days, and I was coming round a bit; but to day it rains again—with me the County is yet upon its good behaviour. I have enjoyed the most delightful Walks these three fine days beautiful enough to make me content here all the summer could I stay

For there's Bishop's teign
And King's teign
And Coomb at the clear teign head—
Where close by the stream
You may have your cream
All spread upon barley bread.

There's arch Brook
And there's larch Brook
Both turning many a mill;
And cooling the drouth
Of the salmon's mouth,
And fattening his silver gill.

¹ A seal which had been found in a field at Stratford-upon-Avon, was thought by Haydon to have belonged to Shakespeare. On the 4 of March 1818 he wrote the following letter, still preserved in his journal:—

My dear Keats,

I shall certainly go mad!—In a field at Stratford-upon-Avon, in a field that belonged to Shakespeare, they have found a gold ring and seal, with the initial thus—a true Lover's knot between W. S.; if *this* is not Shakespeare who is it?—a true-Lover's knot!!—I saw an impression to-day, and am to have one as soon as possible. As sure as you breathe, and that he was the first of beings, the seal belonged to him.—

On Lord!

B. R. Haydon.

At page 208 of Volume II, I have shown that Keats's reply to this letter, above, was written on the 14th of March; and I presume from the Postmark, a London one, that it was either detained by Keats or delayed in the post.

There is Wild wood,
A Mild hood
To the sheep on the lea o' the down,
Where the golden furze,
With its green, thin spurs,
Doth catch at the maiden's gown.

There is Newton marsh
With its spear grass harsh—
A pleasant summer level
Where the maidens sweet
Of the Market Street,
Do meet in the dusk to revel.

There's the Barton rich
With dyke and ditch
And hedge for the thrush to live in
And the hollow tree
For the buzzing bee
And a bank for the wasp to hive in.

And O, and O
The daisies blow
And the primroses are waken'd,
And the violets white
Sit in silver plight,
And the green bud's as long as the spike end

Then who would go
Into dark Soho,
And chatter with dack'd hair'd critics,
When he can stay
For the new-mown hay,
And startle the dappled Prickets?

Here's some dogrel for you—Perhaps you would like a bit of
B—hrell :

Where be ye going, you Devon Maid?
And what have ye there in the Basket?
Ye tight little fairy just fresh from the dairy,
Will ye give me some cream if I ask it?

I love your Meads, and I love your flowers,
And I love your junkets mainly,
But 'hind the door I love kissing more,
O look not so disdainly.

I love your hills, and I love your dales,
And I love your flocks a-bleating—

But O, on the heather to lie together,
With both our hearts a-beating !

I'll put your Basket all safe in a nook,
Your shawl I hang up on the willow,
And we will sigh in the daisy's eye
And kiss on a grass green pillow.

I know not if this rhyming fit has done anything—it will be safe with you if worthy to put among my Lyrics.

How does the work go on? I should like to bring out my *Dentatus*¹ at the time your *Epic* makes its appearance. I expect to have my Mind soon clear for something new. Tom has been much worse : but is now getting better—his remembrances to you. I think of seeing the *Dart* and *Plymouth*—but I don't know. It has as yet been a *Mystery* to me how and where *Wordsworth* went. I can't help thinking he has returned to his *Shell*—with his beautiful *Wife* and his enchanting *Sister*. It is a great *Pity* that *People* should by associating themselves with the finest things, spoil them. *Hunt* has damned *Hampstead* a[nd] masks and sonnets and *Italian* tales. *Wordsworth* has damned the lakes—*Milman* has damned the old drama—*West* has damned wholesale. *Peacock* has damned satire—*Ollier* has damn'd *Music*—*Hazlitt* has damned the bigoted and the blue-stockinged ; how durst the *Man*?! he is your only good damner, and if ever I am damn'd—damn me if I shouldn't like him to damn me. It will not be long ere I see you, but I thought I would just give you a line out of *Devon*.²

Yours affectionately

John Keats

Remember me to all we know.

¹ A picture by Haydon.

² Haydon's reply to Keats was mainly given by Frederick Wordsworth Haydon in the 'Correspondence' &c., Volume II: the complete text set forth below is from the actual copy sent through the post, and subsequently recovered and wafered into the journal: it is dated the 25th of March 1818:—

My dear Keats,

Your bi—ell as you call it is beautiful and I take it as a great friendly kindness to remember me in that way—as often as you feel inclined to give vent remember I am always ready with pleasure to receive the result.—Surely you will not leave Devonshire without going to Plymouth, the country round which is most exquisite. I will give you letters, and promise you a kind and a welcome reception. Do go, my dear Keats; and if you consent, let me know, and I will write my Friends immediately; and go round by the Totness road, which is very fine, and come home by Ashburton and then by Bridgewater, where I have a sister, who will be most happy to see you.—I am getting on well, and have got my *Christ* better than I have ever had it yet—and in a good state to complete it. I am most happy to hear your *Poem* is advancing to publication, God grant it the most complete success, and may its reputation equal your genius. Devonshire has somehow or other the character of being rainy, but I must own to you I do not

XLVII.

To MESSRS. TAYLOR AND HESSEY.

Teignmouth, Saturday Morn.

[Postmark, 23 March 1818.]

My dear Sirs,

I had no idea of your getting on so fast—I thought of bringing my 4th Book to Town all in good time for you—especially after the late unfortunate chance.

I did not however for my own sake delay finishing the copy which was done a few days after my arrival here. I send it off to-day, and will tell you in a Postscript at what time to send for it from the Bull and Mouth or other Inn. You will find the Preface and dedication and the title Page as I should wish it to

think it more so than any other County, and pray remember the time of year; it has rained in Town almost incessantly ever since you went away, the fact is, you dog, you carried the rain with you as Ulysses did the Winds, and then opening your rain bags you look round with a knowing wink and say "curse this Devonshire, how it rains!" Stay till the Summer, and then look into its deep blue summer Sky, and lush grass, and tawny banks, and silver bubbling rivers—you must not leave Devonshire without seeing some of its wild Scenery, rocky, mossy, craggy, with roaring rivers and as clear as crystal—it will do your mind good.

Shakespeare in speaking of somebody who is gradually dying makes some one say—"how is he?"—"Still ill—Nature and sickness *debate it at their leisure.*"—is this not exquisite? When I die I'll have my Shakespeare placed on my heart, with Homer in my right hand and Ariosto in the other, Dante under my head, Tasso at my feet, and Corneille under my —. I hate that Corneille, a heartless, tirade maker—I leave my other side, that is my right one, for you, if you realize all of which your genius is capable, as I am sure you will.

Write me if you go to Devonshire. Mrs. Scott "*con occhi neri*" is as interesting as ever and desires to be remembered. I have heard nothing of Wordsworth ever since he went, which I take to be unkind.—Hazlitt is going to lecture at Crown and Anchor.—I am sorry for it, tho' he will get money, it is letting his talents down a little.—What affectation in Hunt's title—"Foliage"!—I met that horrid creature Miss Kent, looking like a fury and an old maid, mixed.—

Yours ever dear Keats,

B. R. Haydon.

For 'Devonshire' in the final paragraph we should of course read 'Plymouth.'

XLVII. A letter from George Keats, addressed to "Jno. Keats, Post Office, Teignmouth", and dated "Pancras Lane—March 18—1818," appears to have given rise to letters XLVII and XLIX. It supplies some links in the story of that period; so I give it here:

My dear John—

Poor Tom—who could have imagined such a change? I have indeed been sanguine; whenever he has occur[re]d to my thoughts he has appeared nearly in good health, every answer I have given to enquiring Friends has been "much better" and "improving every day." I can hardly believe this melancholy news, having so long accustomed myself to think altogether otherwise—I hope and trust that your *kind* superintendence will prevent any violent bleeding in future, and consequently that this alarm may prove in the end advantageous; Tom must never again presume on his strength, at all events until he has *completely* recover'd. John Reynolds is little better, in many respects worse, he has a very bad rheumatic Fever, and suffers constant pain: it is not said that he is dangerously ill, but I cannot help thinking that so many evils acting upon his most

stand—for a romance is a fine thing notwithstanding the circulating Libraries. My respects to Mrs. Hessey and to Percy Street.

Yours very sincerely

John Keats

P.S. I have been advised to send it to you—you may expect it on Monday—for I sent it by the Post-man to Exeter at the same time with this letter. Adieu.

XLVIII.

To JAMES RICE.

Teignmouth

Tuesday [24 March 1818.]

My dear Rice,

Being in the midst of your favourite Devon, I should not, by rights, pen one word but it should contain a vast portion of Wit, Wisdom and learning—for I have heard that Milton ere he wrote his answer to Salmasius came into these parts, and for one whole month, rolled himself for three whole hours a day, in a certain meadow hard by us—where the mark of his nose at equidistances is still shown. The exhibitor of the said meadow further saith, that, after these rollings, not a nettle sprang up in all the seven acres for seven years, and that from the said time a new sort of plant was made from the whitethorn, of a thornless nature, very much used by the bucks of the present

irritable disposition; deadening his hopes of his advance in business, consequently all his hopes, must make this illness somewhat dangerous.—I called yesterday but he was not sufficiently well to be seen. His sisters are well.—Your letter was most welcome to him. Bailey's in town for a few days, on business for Glegg—I have not seen him.—Mrs. Scott desires her compliments to you and Tom. I have repeatedly called on Taylor and Hessey and have never found them at home, or you should long since have known the progress of your book. Brown has I understand written to you and given you the pleasant information that the printers are in immediate want of the fourth book and preface. By the time you have received this I have no doubt but T. and H. will have received them.—The inclosed 20 pounds No. 834 dated 3rd Feby—1818, will reach you before you are quite aground. I am about paying yours as well as Tom's bills, of which I shall keep regular accounts and for the sake of justice and a future proper understanding I intend calculating the probable amount Tom and I are indebted to you, something of this kind must be done, or at the end of two or three years we shall be all at sixes and sevens. Let me know when you want money. I have paid Hodgkinson who desires his best rem[embrance]s.—I'll write Tom soon—give my love to him—rem[embrance]s to Miss M and C—and love to the Miss I's—Miss Wylie as usual desires her *respects* to you and *best wishes* to Tom—R Draper has been teasing throughout the writing of this to my great annoyance—.

Good bye for the present

Your most affectionate Brother

— George.

The "Miss I's" referred to were no doubt the Misses Jeffrey, with whom the brothers were on very friendly terms. 'Glegg' is doubtless meant for 'Gleig': see pages 39 and 85 *ante*.

day to rap their boots withal. This account made me very naturally suppose that the nettles and thorns etherealized by the scholar's rotatory motion, and garnered in his head, thence flew, after a process of fermentation, against the luckless Salmasius, and occasioned his well-known and unhappy end. What a happy thing it would be if we could settle our thoughts and make our minds up on any matter in five minutes, and remain content, that is, build a sort of mental cottage of feelings, quiet and pleasant—to have a sort of philosophical back-garden, and cheerful holiday-keeping front one. But, alas! this never can be; for, as the material cottager knows there are such places as France and Italy, and the Andes, and burning mountains, so the spiritual cottager has knowledge of the terra semi-incognita of things unearthly, and cannot for his life keep in the check-rein—or I should stop here, quiet and comfortable in my theory of—nettles. You will see, however, I am obliged to run wild, being attracted by the load-stone, concatenation. No sooner had I settled the knotty point of Salmasius, than the devil put this whim into my head in the likeness of one of Pythagoras's questionings—Did Milton do more good or harm in the world? He wrote, let me inform you (for I have it from a friend who had it of—), he wrote "Lycidas," "Comus," "Paradise Lost" and other Poems, with much delectable prose; he was moreover an active friend to man all his life, and has been since his death. Very good—but, my dear Fellow, I must let you know that, as there is ever the same quantity of matter constituting this habitable globe, as the ocean notwithstanding the enormous changes and revolutions taking place in some or other of its demesnes—notwithstanding Waterspouts, whirlpools and mighty rivers emptying themselves into it—still is made up of the same bulk, nor ever varies the number of its atoms—and as a certain bulk of water was instituted at the creation—so very likely a certain portion of intellect was spun forth into the thin air, for the brains of man to prey upon it. You will see my drift without any unnecessary parenthesis. That which is contained in the Pacific could not lie in the hollow of the Caspian—that which was in Milton's head could not find room in Charles the Second's. He like a Moon attracted intellect to its flow—it has not ebbed yet, but has left the shore-pebbles all bare—I mean all Bucks,¹ Authors of Hengist, and Castlereaghs of the present day; who without Milton's gormandizing might have been all wise men. Now for as much as I was very predisposed to a country I had heard you speak so highly of, I took particular notice of everything during my journey, and have bought some nice folio asses' skins for memorandums. I have seen everything but the

¹ Charles Bucke was a bad dramatist,—‘Hengist,’ I believe, a bad play.

wind—and that, they say, becomes visible by taking a dose of acorns, or sleeping one night in a hog-trough, with your tail to the Sow-Sow-West. Some of the little Bar-maids look'd at me as if I knew Jem Rice—but when I took (cherry?) Brandy they were quite convinced. One asked whether you preserved¹ a secret she gave you on the nail—Another, how many buttons of your coat were buttoned in general.—I told her it used to be four—But since you had become acquainted with one Martin you had reduced it to three, and had been turning this third one in your mind—and would do so with finger and thumb only you had taken to snuff. I have met with a brace or twain of little Long-heads—not a bit o' the German. All in the neatest little dresses, and avoiding all the puddles, but very fond of peppermint drops, laming ducks, and . . . Well, I can't tell! I hope you are showing poor Reynolds the way to get well. Send me a good account of him, and if I can, I'll send you one of Tom. Oh! for a [fine?] day and all well! I went yesterday to Dawlish fair.

Over the Hill and over the Dale,
And over the Bourne to Dawlish,
Where ginger-bread wives have a scanty sale,
And ginger-bread nuts are smallish, &c. &c.

Tom's remembrances and mine to you all.

Your sincere friend

John Keats

XLIX.

To JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS.

Little Britain, London.

Teignmouth,
25 March 1818.

My dear Reynolds,

In hopes of cheering you through a Minute or two, I was determined will he nill he to send you some lines, so you will excuse the unconnected subject and careless verse. You know, I am sure, Claude's Enchanted Castle, and I wish you may be pleased with my remembrance of it. The Rain is come on again—I think with me Devonshire stands a very poor chance. I shall damn it up hill and down dale, if it keep up to the average of six fine days in three weeks. Let me have better news of you.

Tom's remembrances to you. Remember us to all.

Your affectionate friend

John Keats

Dear Reynolds! as last night I lay in bed,
There came before my eyes that wonted thread

¹ Word doubtful.

Of shapes, and shadows, and remembrances,
 That every other minute vex and please :
 Things all disjointed come from north and south,-
 Two Witch's eyes above a Cherub's mouth,
 Voltaire with casque and shield and habergeon,
 And Alexander with his nightcap on ;
 Old Socrates a-tying his cravat,
 And Hazlitt playing with Miss Edgeworth's cat ;
 And Junius Brutus, pretty well so so,¹
 Making the best of's way towards Soho.

Few are there who escape these visitings,—
 Perhaps one or two whose lives have patent wings,
 And thro' whose curtains peeps no hellish nose,
 No wild-boar tushes, and no Mermaid's toes ;
 But flowers bursting out with lusty pride,
 And young Æolian harps personify'd ;
 Some Titian colours touch'd into real life,—
 The sacrifice goes on ; the pontiff knife
 Gleams in the Sun, the milk-white heifer lows,
 The pipes go shrilly, the libation flows :
 A white sail shows above the green-head cliff,
 Moves round the point, and throws her anchor stiff ;
 The mariners join hymn with those on land.

You know the Enchanted Castle,—it doth stand
 Upon a rock, on the border of a Lake,
 Nested in trees, which all do seem to shake
 From some old magic-like Urganda's Sword.
 O Phœbus ! that I had thy sacred word
 To show this Castle, in fair dreaming wise,
 Unto my friend, while sick and ill he lies !

You know it well enough, where it doth seem
 A mossy place, a Merlin's Hall, a dream ;
 You know the clear Lake, and the little Isles,
 The mountains blue, and cold near neighbour rills,
 All which elsewhere are but half animate ;
 There do they look alive to love and hate,
 To smiles and frowns ; they seem a lifted mound
 Above some giant, pulsing underground.

Part of the Building was a chosen See,
 Built by a banish'd Santon of Chaldee ;
 The other part, two thousand years from him,
 Was built by Cuthbert de Saint Aldebrim ;

¹ The slang term *pretty well so-so* was used by Keats's set to signify *pretty well tipsy*.

Then there's a little wing, far from the Sun,
Built by a Lapland Witch turn'd maudlin Nun ;
And many other juts of aged stone
Founded with many a mason-devil's groan.

The doors all look as if they op'd themselves,
The windows as if latch'd by Fays and Elves,
And from them comes a silver flash of light,
As from the westward of a Summer's night ;
Or like a beauteous woman's large blue eyes
Gone mad thro' olden songs and poesies.

See ! what is coming from the distance dim !
A golden Galley all in silken trim !
Three rows of oars are lightening, moment whiles,
Into the verd'rous bosoms of those isles ;
Towards the shade, under the Castle wall,
It comes in silence,—now 'tis hidden all.
The Clarion sounds, and from a Postern-gate
An echo of sweet music doth create
A fear in the poor Herdsman, who doth bring
His beasts to trouble the enchanted spring,—
He tells of the sweet music, and the spot,
To all his friends, and they believe him not.

O that our dreamings all, of sleep or wake,
Would all their colours from the sunset take :
From something of material sublime,
Rather than shadow our own soul's day-time
In the dark void of night. For in the world
We jostle,—but my flag is not unfurl'd
On the Admiral-staff,—and so philosophize
I dare not yet ! Oh, never will the prize,
High reason, and the love of good and ill,
Be my award ! Things cannot to the will
Be settled, but they tease us out of thought ;
Or is it that imagination brought
Beyond its proper bound, yet still confin'd,
Lost in a sort of Purgatory blind,
Cannot refer to any standard law
Of either earth or heaven ? It is a flaw
In happiness, to see beyond our bourn,—
It forces us in summer skies to mourn,
It spoils the singing of the Nightingale.

Dear Reynolds ! I have a mysterious tale,
And cannot speak it : the first page I read
Upon a Lampit rock of green sea-weed
Among the breakers ; 'twas a quiet eve,
The rocks were silent, the wide sea did weave

An untumultuous fringe of silver foam
 Along the flat brown sand ; I was at home
 And should have been most happy,—but I saw
 Too far into the sea, where every maw
 The greater on the less feeds evermore.—
 But I saw too distinct into the core
 Of an eternal fierce destruction,
 And so from happiness I far was gone.
 Still am I sick of it, and tho', to-day,
 I've gather'd young spring-leaves, and flowers gay
 Of periwinkle and wild strawberry,
 Still do I that most fierce destruction see,—
 The Shark at savage prey,—the Hawk at pounce,—
 The gentle Robin, like a Pard or Ounce,
 Ravening a worm,—Away, ye horrid moods !
 Moods of one's mind ! You know I hate them well.
 You know I'd sooner be a clapping Bell
 To some Kamtschatcan Missionary Church,
 Than with these horrid moods be left i' the lurch.

L.

TO BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON.

Lisson Grove North, Paddington, Middx.

Wednesday —

[*Postmarks*, Teignmouth, and 10 April 1818.]

My dear Haydon,

I am glad you were pleased with my nonsense, and if it so happen that the humour takes me when I have set down to prose to you I will not gainsay it. I should be (God forgive me) ready to swear because I cannot make use of your assistance in going through Devon if I was not in my own Mind determined to visit it thoroughly at some more favourable time of the year. But now Tom (who is getting greatly better) is anxious to be in Town—therefore I put off my threading the County. I purpose within a month to put my knapsack at my back and make a pedestrian tour through the North of England, and part of Scotland—to make a sort of Prologue to the Life I intend to pursue—that is to write, to study and to see all Europe at the lowest expence. I will clamber through the Clouds and exist. I will get such an accumulation of stupendous recollections that as I walk through the suburbs of London I may not see them—I will stand upon Mount Blanc and remember this coming

L. This letter may be presumed to have been written on the 8th of April, which was a Wednesday.

Summer when I intend to straddle Ben-Lomond—with my soul!—galligaskins are out of the Question. I am nearer myself to hear your Christ is being tinted into immortality. Believe me Haydon your picture is part of myself—I have ever been too sensible of the labyrinthian path to eminence in Art (judging from Poetry) ever to think I understood the emphasis of painting. The innumerable compositions and decompositions which take place between the intellect and its thousand materials before it arrives at that trembling delicate and snail-horn perception of beauty. I know not you[r] many havens of intenseness—nor ever can know them: but for this I hope nought¹ you achieve is lost upon me: for when a Schoolboy the abstract Idea I had of an heroic painting—was what I cannot describe. I saw it somewhat sideways, large, prominent, round, and colour'd with magnificence—somewhat like the feel I have of Anthony and Cleopatra. Or of Alcibiades leaning on his Crimson Couch in his Galley, his broad shoulders imperceptibly heaving with the Sea. That passage in Shakespeare is finer than this—

See how the surly Warwick mans the Wall.²

I like your consignment of Corneille—that's the humour of it. They shall be called your Posthumous Works. I don't understand your bit of Italian.³ I hope she will awake from her dream and flourish fair—my respects to her. The Hedges by this time are beginning to leaf—Cats are becoming more vociferous—young Ladies who wear Watches are always looking at them. Women about forty five think the Season very backward—Ladies' Mares have but half an allowance of food. It rains here again, has been doing so for three days—however as I told you I'll take a trial in June, July, or August next year.

I am afraid Wordsworth went rather huff'd out of Town—I am sorry for it—he cannot expect his fireside Divan to be infallible—he cannot expect but that every man of worth is as proud as himself. O that he had not fit with a Warrener⁴—that is din'd at Kingston's. I shall be in town in about a fortnight and then we will have a day or so now and then before I set out on my northern expedition—we will have no more abomin-

¹Keats wrote 'not' in the letter. It seems certain that he meant to write 'nought.'

²See 'The Third Part of King Henry the Sixth,' Act V, Scene i.

³The allusion to Mrs. Scott's black eyes—page 91 *ante*, where also will be found the reference to Corneille. The next passage, on the season, should be compared with 'A Now,' pages 248-52 of Volume III.

⁴This is not quite correctly quoted from the words of Simple in 'The Merry Wives of Windsor' (Act I, Scene iv): "I forsooth: but he is a tall man of his hands, as any is betweene this and his head: he hath fought with a Warrener."

able Rows—for they leave one in a fearful silence—having settled the Methodists let us be rational—not upon compulsion—no—if it will out let it—but I will not play the Bassoon any more deliberately.¹ Remember me to Hazlitt and Bewick—

Your affectionate friend

John Keats—

LI.

To JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS.

Little Britain, London.

Thy. mornng. [Teignmouth,
9 April, 1818.]

My dear Reynolds,

Since you all agree that the thing² is bad, it must be so—though I am not aware there is anything like Hunt in it (and if there is, it is my natural way, and I have something in common with Hunt). Look it over again, and examine into the motives, the seeds, from which any one sentence sprung—I have not the slightest feel of humility towards the public—or to anything in existence,—but the eternal Being, the Principle of Beauty, and the Memory of great Men. When I am writing for myself for the mere sake of the moment's enjoyment, perhaps nature has its course with me—but a Preface is written to the Public; a thing I cannot help looking upon as an Enemy, and which I cannot address without feelings of Hostility. If I write a Preface in a supple or subdued style, it will not be in character with me as a public speaker—I would be subdued before my friends, and thank them for subduing me—but among Multitudes of Men—I have no feel of stooping, I hate the idea of humility to them.

¹ Frederick W. Haydon says in the 'Correspondence,' Volume II, page 11, that Keats "appears to allude here to the violent political and religious discussions of the set, as much as to an absurd practice they had, when they met, of amusing themselves after dinner by a concert, each imitating a different instrument. The fun was as boisterous by all accounts as the discussion was heated." The next trace I find of the correspondence with the painter is a letter in Haydon's journal dated the 8th of May 1817 or 1818, the final figure of the year-date being altered and uncertain; but it is inserted opposite to a letter of May 1818, and clearly points to 'Endymion': it is as follows:

My dear Keats,

I have read your delicious Poem, with exquisite enjoyment, it is the most delightful thing of the time—you have taken up the great trumpet of nature and made it sound with a voice of your own—I write in a great hurry—You will realize all I wish or expect—Success attend you my glorious fellow—& Believe me

ever & ever yours

B. R. Haydon

² The first Preface to 'Endymion.'

I never wrote one single Line of Poetry with the least Shadow of public thought.

Forgive me for vexing you and making a Trojan horse of such a Trifle, both with respect to the matter in Question, and myself—but it eases me to tell you—I could not live without the love of my friends—I would jump down *Ætna* for any great Public good—but I hate a Mawkish Popularity. I cannot be subdued before them. My glory would be to daunt and dazzle the thousand jabberers about Pictures and Books—I see swarms of Porcupines with their Quills erect “like lime-twigs set to catch my Winged Book,” and I would fright them away with a torch. You will say my Preface is not much of a Torch. It would have been too insulting “to begin from Jove,” and I could not set a golden head upon a thing of clay. If there is any fault in the Preface it is not affectation, but an undersong of disrespect to the Public—if I write another Preface it must be done without a thought of those people—I will think about it.¹ If it should not reach you in four or five days, tell Taylor to publish it without a Preface, and let the Dedication simply stand—“inscribed to the Memory of Thomas Chatterton.”

I had resolved last night to write to you this morning—I wish it had been about something else—something to greet you towards the close of your long illness. I have had one or two intimations of your going to Hampstead for a space; and I regret to see your confounded Rheumatism keeps you in Little Britain where I am sure the air is too confined. Devonshire continues rainy. As the drops beat against the window, they give me the same sensation as a quart of cold water offered to revive a half-drowned devil—no feel of the clouds dropping fatness; but as if the roots of the earth were rotten, cold, and drenched. I have not been able to go to Kent’s cave at Babbicombe—however on one very beautiful day I had a fine clamber over the rocks all along as far as that place. I shall be in Town in about Ten days. We go by way of Bath on purpose to call on Bailey. I hope soon to be writing to you about the things of the north, purposing to wayfare all over those parts. I have settled my accoutrements in my own mind, and will go to gorge wonders. However, we’ll have some days together before I set out.

¹ As to the Preface to ‘*Endymion*,’ Lord Houghton remarks—“He did ‘think about it,’ and within the next twenty-four hours he produced in its stead one of the most beautiful ‘Introductions’ in the range of our literature. The personal circumstance is touched with a delicacy and tenderness that could only be overlooked by stupidity, or misrepresented by malice, and the deep truth of the latter periods implies a justice of psychological intuition as surprising as anything in the poem itself. What might one not be authorized to expect from a genius that could thus gauge its own capacity, and, in the midst of the consciousness of its power, apprehend so wisely the sources and extent of its deficiencies?”

I have many reasons for going wonder-ways: to make my winter chair free from spleen—to enlarge my vision—to escape disquisitions on Poetry and Kingston Criticism;¹ to promote digestion and economize shoe-leather. I'll have leather buttons and belt; and, if Brown holds his mind, over the Hills we go. If my Books will help me to it, then will I take all Europe in turn, and see the Kingdoms of the Earth and the glory of them. Tom is getting better, he hopes you may meet him at the top o' the hill. My love to your nurses.

I am ever
Your affectionate Friend
John Keats.

LII.

TO JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS.

Little Britain, London.

Teignmouth,
Friday [10 April, 1818].

My dear Reynolds,

I am anxious you should find this Preface tolerable. If there is an affectation in it 'tis natural to me. Do let the printer's devil cook it, and let me be as "the casing air."

You are too good in this Matter—were I in your state, I am certain I should have no thought but of discontent and illness—I might though be taught patience: I had an idea of giving no Preface; however, don't you think this had better go? O, let it—one should not be too timid—of committing faults.

The climate here weighs us down completely; Tom is quite low-spirited. It is impossible to live in a country which is continually under hatches. Who would live in a region of Mists, Game Laws, indemnity Bills, &c., when there is such a place as Italy? It is said this England from its Clime produces a Spleen, able to engender the finest Sentiments, and cover the whole face of the isle with Green—so it ought, I'm sure.—I should still like the Dedication simply, as I said in my last.²

I wanted to send you a few songs, written in your favorite Devon—it cannot be—Rain! Rain! Rain! I am going this morning to take a facsimile of a Letter of Nelson's, very much to his honour—you will be greatly pleased when you see it—in about a week. What a spite it is one cannot get out—

¹The reference is probably to Kingston the Commissioner of Stamps. See pages 52 and 53 *ante*.

²Keats's insistence on this point may be in requisition some of these days. The late Gabriel Rossetti was anxious to see the original Dedication substituted for the final and simpler one; and other critics of the future may have the same preference, which I am sure Rossetti would have been the last to push to execution had he noticed these passages on the subject.

the little way I went yesterday, I found a lane banked on each side with store of Primroses, while the earlier bushes are beginning to leaf.

I shall hear a good account of you soon.

Your affectionate friend

John Keats

My Love to all and remember me to Taylor.

LIII.

To JOHN TAYLOR.

Teignmouth,
Friday [24 April 1818].

My dear Taylor,

I think I did wrong to leave to you all the trouble of *Endymion*—But I could not help it then—another time I shall be more bent to all sorts of troubles and disagreeables. Young men for some time have an idea that such a thing as happiness is to be had, and therefore are extremely impatient under any unpleasant restraining. In time, however, of such stuff is the world about them, they know better, and instead of striving from uneasiness, greet it as an habitual sensation, a pannier which is to weigh upon them through life. And in proportion to my disgust at the task is my sense of your kindness and anxiety. The book pleased me much. It is very free from faults; and, although there are one or two words I should wish replaced, I see in many places an improvement greatly to the purpose.

I think those speeches which are related—those parts where the Speaker repeats a speech, such as Glaucus's repetition of

LIII. Lord Houghton appends the following note to this remarkable letter: "It is difficult to add anything to the passages in these letters, which show the spirit in which '*Endymion*' was written and published. This first sustained work of a man whose undoubted genius was idolised by a circle of affectionate friends, whose weaknesses were rather encouraged than repressed by the intellectual atmosphere in which he lived, who had rarely been enabled to measure his spiritual stature with that of persons of other schools of thought and habits of mind, appears to have been produced with a humility that the severest criticism might not have engendered. Keats, it is clear, did not require to be told how far he was from the perfect Poet. The very consciousness of the capability to do something higher and better, which accompanies the lowly estimate of his work, kept the ideal ever before him, and urged him to complete it rather as a process of poetical education, than as a triumph of contented power. Never was less presumption exhibited—never the sharp stroke of contemptuous censure less required. His own dissatisfaction with his book, and his brother's ill-health, cast over his mind the gloom which he hardly conceals in the letters of this period, though it is remarkable how free they are, at all times, from any merely querulous expressions, and from the vague sentimentality attributed to some of his literary associates."

Circe's words, should have inverted commas to every line. In this there is a little confusion. If we divide the speeches into *identical* and *related*; to the former put merely one inverted comma at the beginning and another at the end; to the latter inverted commas before every line, the book will be better understood at the first glance—Look at pages 126, 127, you will find in the 3^d line the beginning of a related speech marked thus “Ah! art awake—” while, at the same time, in the next page the continuation of the *identical* speech is marked in the same manner “young man of Latmos”—you will find on the other side all the parts which should have inverted commas to every line.

I was proposing to travel over the North this summer. There is but one thing to prevent me.—I know nothing—I have read nothing—and I mean to follow Solomon's directions, “Get learning—get understanding.” I find earlier days are gone by—I find that I can have no enjoyment in the world but continual drinking of knowledge. I find there is no worthy pursuit but the idea of doing some good to the world. Some do it with their society—some with their wit—some with their benevolence—some with a sort of power of conferring pleasure and good humour on all they meet—and in a thousand ways, all dutiful to the command of great Nature—there is but one way for me. The road lies through application, study, and thought. I will pursue it; and for that end purpose retiring for some years. I have been hovering for some time between an exquisite sense of the luxurious, and a love for philosophy,—were I calculated for the former, I should be glad. But as I am not, I shall turn all my soul to the latter.—My brother Tom is getting better, and I hope I shall see both him and Reynolds better before I retire from the world. I shall see you soon, and have some talk about what books I shall take with me.

Your very sincere friend

John Keats

Pray remember me to Hessey, Woodhouse, and Percy Street.

LIV.

To JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS.

Little Britain, London.

Teignmouth,
27 April, 1818.

My dear Reynolds,

It is an awful while since you have heard from me. I hope I may not be punished, when I see you well, and so anxious as you always are for me, with the remembrance of my so seldom writing when you were so horribly confined. The

most unhappy hours in our lives are those in which we recollect times past to our own blushing. If we are immortal, that must be the Hell. If I must be immortal, I hope it will be after having taken a little of "that watery labyrinth," in order to forget some of my school-boy days, and others since those.

I have heard from George, at different times, how slowly you were recovering. It is a tedious thing—but all medical men will tell you how far a very gradual amendment is preferable; you will be strong after this, never fear. We are here still enveloped in clouds—I lay awake last night listening to the Rain, with a sense of being drowned and rotted like a grain of wheat. There is a continual courtesy between the Heavens and the Earth. The heavens rain down their unwelcomeness, and the Earth sends it up again to be returned to-morrow. Tom has taken a fancy to a physician here, Dr. Turton, and, I think, is getting better—therefore I shall perhaps remain here some months. I have written to George for some Books—shall learn Greek, and very likely Italian—and in other ways prepare myself to ask Hazlitt in about a year's time, the best metaphysical road I can take. For although I take Poetry to be Chief, yet there is something else wanting to one who passes his life among Books and thoughts on Books—I long to feast upon old Homer as we have upon Shakspeare, and as I have lately upon Milton. If you understood Greek, and would read me passages now and then, explaining their meaning, 'twould be, from its mistiness, perhaps, a greater luxury than reading the thing one's self. I shall be happy when I can do the same for you. I have written for my folio Shakspeare, in which there are the first few stanzas of my "Pot of Basil." I have the rest here finished, and will copy the whole out fair shortly, and George will bring it you. The compliment is paid by us to Boccace, whether we publish or no: so there is content in this world—mine is short—you must be deliberate about yours: you must not think of it till many months after you are quite well:—then put your passion to it, and I shall be bound up with you in the shadows of Mind, as we are in our matters of human life. Perhaps a stanza or two will not be too foreign to your Sickness.

Were they unhappy then?—it cannot be—

Too many tears for lovers have been shed,

Too many sighs give we to them in fee,

Too much of pity after they are dead,

Too many doleful stories do we see,

Whose matter in bright gold were best be read;

Except in such a page where Theseus' spouse

Over the pathless waves towards him bows.

But, for the general award of love,

The little sweet doth kill much bitterness;

Though Dido silent is in under-grove,
 And Isabella's was a great distress,
 Though young Lorenzo in warm Indian clove
 Was not embalm'd, this truth is not the less—
 Even bees, the little almsmen of spring-bowers,
 Know there is richest juice in poison-flowers.

She wept alone for pleasures not to be ;
 Sorely she wept until the night came on,
 And then, instead of love, O misery !
 She brooded o'er the luxury alone :
 What might have been too plainly did she see,
 And to the silence made a gentle moan,
 Spreading her perfect arms upon the air,
 And on her couch low murmuring "Where? O where?"

I heard from Rice this morning—very witty—and have just written to Bailey—Don't you think I am brushing up in the letter way? and being in for it you shall hear again from me very shortly :—if you will promise not to put hand to paper for me until you can do it with a tolerable ease of health—except it be a line or two. Give my love to your Mother and Sister. Remember me to the Butlers—not forgetting Sarah.

Your affectionate friend,
 John Keats.

LV.

To JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS. *N.E.*

Teignmouth,
 3 May [1818].

My dear Reynolds,

What I complain of is, that I have been in so uneasy a state of Mind as not to be fit to write to an invalid. I cannot write to any length under a disguised feeling. I should have loaded you with an addition of gloom, which I am sure you do not want. I am now thank God in a humour to give you a good groat's worth—for Tom, after a Night without a Wink of sleep, and overburthened with fever, has got up after a refreshing day-sleep and is better than he has been for a long time ; and you I trust have been again round the Common without any effect but refreshment. As to the Matter, I hope I can say with Sir Andrew "I have matter enough in my head" in your favour. And now, in the second place, for I reckon that I have finished my Imprimis, I am glad you blow up the weather—all through your letter there is a leaning towards a climate-curse, and you know what a delicate satisfaction there is in having a vexation anathematized : one would think there has

been growing up, for these last four thousand years, a grand-child Scion of the old forbidden tree, and that some modern Eve had just violated it; and that there was come with double charge

“Notus and Afer, black with thundrous clouds
From Serraliona.”¹

I shall breathe worsted stockings² sooner than I thought for—Tom wants to be in town: we will have some such days upon the heath like that of last summer—and why not with the same book? or what say you to a black-letter Chaucer, printed in 1596: aye, I’ve got one, huzza! I shall have it bound en gothique—a nice sombre binding—it will go a little way to unmodernize. And also I see no reason, because I have been away this last month, why I should not have a peep at your Spenserian—notwithstanding you speak of your office, in my thought a little too early, for I do not see why a Mind like yours is not capable of harbouring and digesting the whole Mystery of Law as easily as Parson Hugh does pippins,³ which did not hinder him from his poetic canary. Were I to study Physic or rather Medicine again, I feel it would not make the least difference in my Poetry; when the mind is in its infancy a Bias is in reality a Bias, but when we have acquired more strength, a Bias becomes no Bias. Every department of Knowledge we see excellent and calculated towards a great whole—I am so convinced of this that I am glad at not having given away my medical Books, which I shall again look over to keep alive the little I know thitherwards; and moreover intend through you and Rice to become a sort of pip-civilian. An extensive knowledge is needful to thinking people—it takes away the heat and fever; and helps, by widening speculation, to ease the Burden of the Mystery, a thing which I begin to understand a little, and which weighed upon you in the most gloomy and true sentence in your letter. The difference of high Sensations with and without knowledge appears to me this: in the latter case we are falling continually ten thousand fathoms deep and being blown up again, without wings, and with all [the] horror of a bare-shouldered creature—in the former case, our shoulders are fledged, and we go through the same air and space without fear. This is running one’s rigs on the score of abstracted benefit—when we come to human Life and the affections, it is impossible

¹ ‘Paradise Lost,’ Book X, lines 702-3.

² Under the same roof with the children of the Postman Bentley, at whose house the Keatses lodged.

³ See ‘The Merry Wives of Windsor,’ Act I, Scene ii:

“*Sir Hugh Evans*...I pray you begon: I will make an end of my dinner; her’s Pippins and Cheese to come.”

to know how a parallel of breast and head can be drawn (you will forgive me for thus privately treading out of my depth, and take it for treading as school-boys tread the water); it is impossible to know how far knowledge will console us for the death of a friend, and the ill "that flesh is heir to." With respect to the affections and Poetry you must know by a sympathy my thoughts that way, and I dare say these few lines will be but a ratification: I wrote them on May-day—and intend to finish the ode all in good time—

Mother of Hermes! and still youthful Maia!
 May I sing to thee
 As thou wast hymned on the shores of Baiæ?
 Or may I woo thee
 In earlier Sicilian? or thy smiles
 Seek as they once were sought, in Grecian isles,
 By bards who died content on pleasant sward,
 Leaving great verse unto a little clan?
 O, give me their old vigour, and unheard
 Save of the quiet Primrose, and the span
 Of heaven and few ears,
 Rounded by thee, my song should die away
 Content as theirs,
 Rich in the simple worship of a day.—

You may perhaps be anxious to know for fact to what sentence in your Letter I allude. You say, "I fear there is little chance of anything else in this life"—you seem by that to have been going through with a more painful and acute zest the same labyrinth that I have—I have come to the same conclusion thus far. My Branchings out therefrom have been numerous: one of them is the consideration of Wordsworth's genius and as a help, in the manner of gold being the meridian Line of worldly wealth, how he differs from Milton. And ere I have nothing but surmises, from an uncertainty whether Milton's apparently less anxiety for Humanity proceeds from his seeing further or not than Wordsworth: and whether Wordsworth has in truth epic passion, and martyrs himself to the human heart, the main region of his song. In regard to his genius alone—we find what he says true as far as we have experienced, and we can judge no further but by larger experience—for axioms in philosophy are not axioms till they are proved upon our pulses. We read fine things, but never feel them to the full until we have gone the same steps as the author.—I know this is not plain; you will know exactly my meaning when I say that now I shall relish Hamlet more than I ever have done—Or better—You are sensible no man can set down Venery as a bestial or joyless thing until he is sick of it, and therefore all philosophizing on it would be mere wording. Until we are sick, we understand not;

in fine, as Byron says, "Knowledge is sorrow"; and I go on to say that "Sorrow is wisdom"—and further for aught we can know for certainty "Wisdom is folly."—So you see how I have run away from Wordsworth and Milton, and shall still run away from what was in my head, to observe, that some kind of letters are good squares, others handsome ovals, and other some orbicular, others spheroid—and why should not there be another species with two rough edges like a Rat-trap. I hope you will find all my long letters of that species, and all will be well; for by merely touching the spring delicately and ethereally, the rough-edged will fly immediately into a proper compactness; and thus you may make a good wholesome loaf, with your own leaven in it, of my fragments. If you cannot find this said Rat-trap sufficiently tractable, alas for me, it being an impossibility in grain for my ink to stain otherwise: If I scribble long letters, I must play my vagaries—I must be too heavy, or too light, for whole pages—I must be quaint—and free of Tropes and figures—I must play my draughts as I please, and for my advantage and your erudition, crown a white with a black, or a black with a white, and move into black or white, far and near as I please.—I must go from Hazlitt to Patmore,¹ and make Wordsworth and Coleman play at leap-frog, or keep one of them down a whole half-holiday at fly-the-garter—"from Gray to Gay, from Little to Shakespeare." Also, as a long cause requires two or more sittings of the Court, so a long letter will require two or more sittings of the Breech, wherefore I shall resume after dinner—

Have you not seen a Gull, an orc, a Sea-Mew, or anything to bring this Line to a proper length, and also fill up this clear part; that like the Gull I may *dip*²—I hope, not out of sight—and also, like a Gull, I hope to be lucky in a good sized fish.—This crossing a letter is not without its association—for chequer-work leads us naturally to a Milkmaid, a milkmaid to Hogarth, Hogarth to Shakespeare—Shakespeare to Hazlitt, Hazlitt back to Shakespeare—and thus by merely pulling an apron-string we set a pretty peal of Chimes at work. Let them chime on while, with your patience, I will return to Wordsworth—whether or no he has an extended vision or a circumscribed grandeur—whether he is an eagle in his nest or on the wing. And to be more explicit and to show you how tall I stand by the giant, I will put

¹ Peter George Patmore the intimate of Hazlitt in the matter of 'Liber Amoris,' was the author of 'The Months,' 'Letters on England,' and many later works including 'My Friends and Acquaintance' (3 volumes, 1854). He was the father of Coventry Patmore.

² Woodhouse has recorded that the first page of the letter was crossed, and that the first two lines, being written in the margin, stood out clearly, while the word "dip" was the first word that dipped into the obscurity of the writing which at that point Keats began to cross.

down a simile of human life as far as I now perceive it ; that is, to the point to which I say we both have arrived at. Well—I compare human life to a large Mansion of many apartments, two of which I can only describe, the doors of the rest being as yet shut upon me. The first we step into we call the Infant, or Thoughtless Chamber, in which we remain as long as we do not think. We remain there a long while, and notwithstanding the doors of the second Chamber remain wide open, showing a bright appearance, we care not to hasten to it ; but are at length imperceptibly impelled by the awakening of the thinking principle within us—we no sooner get into the second Chamber, which I shall call the Chamber of Maiden-Thought, than we become intoxicated with the light and the atmosphere, we see nothing but pleasant wonders, and think of delaying there for ever in delight. However among the effects this breathing is father of is that tremendous one of sharpening one's vision into the heart and nature of Man—of convincing one's nerves that the world is full of Misery and Heartbreak, Pain, Sickness, and oppression—whereby this Chamber of Maiden Thought becomes gradually darkened, and at the same time, on all sides of it, many doors are set open—but all dark—all leading to dark passages. We see not the balance of good and evil ; we are in a mist, *we* are now in that state, we feel the “Burden of the Mystery.” To this point was Wordsworth come, as far as I can conceive, when he wrote “Tintern Abbey,” and it seems to me that his genius is explorative of those dark Passages. Now if we live, and go on thinking, we too shall explore them. He is a genius and superior to us, in so far as he can, more than we, make discoveries and shed a light in them. Here I must think Wordsworth is deeper than Milton, though I think it has depended more upon the general and gregarious advance of intellect, than individual greatness of Mind. From the *Paradise Lost* and the other Works of Milton, I hope it is not too presuming, even between ourselves, to say, that his Philosophy, human and divine, may be tolerably understood by one not much advanced in years. In his time, Englishmen were just emancipated from a great superstition, and Men had got hold of certain points and resting-places in reasoning which were too newly born to be doubted, and too much opposed by the Mass of Europe not to be thought ethereal and authentically divine—Who could gainsay his ideas on virtue, vice, and Chastity in *Comus* just at the time of the dismissal of Cod-pieces and a hundred other disgraces? who would not rest satisfied with his hintings at good and evil in the *Paradise Lost*, when just free from the Inquisition and burning in Smithfield? The Reformation produced such immediate and great benefits, that Protestantism was considered under the immediate eye of heaven, and its own remaining dogmas and superstitions then, as it

were, regenerated, constituted those resting-places and seeming sure points of Reasoning—from that I have mentioned, Milton, whatever he may have thought in the sequel, appears to have been content with these by his writings. He did not think into the human heart as Wordsworth has done. Yet Milton as a Philosopher had sure as great powers as Wordsworth. What is then to be inferred? O many things. It proves there is really a grand march of intellect, it proves that a mighty Providence subdues the mightiest minds to the service of the time being, whether it be in human Knowledge or Religion. I have often pitied a tutor who has to hear “Nom. Musa” so often dinn’d into his ears—I hope you may not have the same pain in this scribbling—I may have read these things before, but I never had even a thus dim perception of them; and moreover I like to say my lesson to one who will endure my tediousness, for my own sake. After all there is certainly something real in the world—Moore’s present to Hazlitt is real—I like that Moore, and am glad I saw him at the Theatre just before I left town. Tom has spit a *leetle* blood this afternoon, and that is rather a damper—but I know—the truth is, there is something real in the World. Your third Chamber of Life shall be a lucky and a gentle one—stored with the wine of Love—and the bread of Friendship. When you see George, if he should not have received a letter from me tell him he will find one at home most likely—tell Bailey I hope soon to see him. Remember me to all. The leaves have been out here for many a day. I have written to George for the first stanzas of my “Isabel,”—I shall have them soon, and will copy the whole out for you.

Your affectionate friend

John Keats

LVI.

To MRS. JEFFREY.

Teignmouth.

Honiton,

[May 1818.]

My dear Mrs. Jeffrey,

My Brother has borne his Journey thus far remarkably well. I am too sensible of your anxiety for us not to send this by the chaise back for you. Give our goodbyes to Marrian and Fanny. Believe me we shall bear you in Mind and that I shall write soon.

Yours very truly,

John Keats.

LVI. Up to 1891 Mrs. Jeffrey and her daughters remained unknown in the story of Keats. Between that time and the publication of my illustrated edition of his Letters in 1895, this letter and three others to the young ladies were discovered. Mr. A. Forbes Sieveking published them in ‘The Fortnightly Review.’

LVII.

To BENJAMIN BAILEY.

Hampstead,
Thursday [28 May 1818].

My dear Bailey,

I should have answered your Letter on the Moment, if I could have said yes to your invitation. What hinders me is insuperable: I will tell it at a little length. You know my brother George has been out of employ for some time: it has weighed very much upon him, and driven him to scheme and turn over things in his Mind. The result has been his resolution to emigrate to the back Settlements of America, become Farmer and work with his own hands, after purchasing 14 hundred acres of the American Government. This for many reasons has met with my entire Consent—and the chief one is this; he is of too independent and liberal a Mind to get on in Trade in this Country, in which a generous Man with a scanty resource must be ruined. I would sooner he should till the ground than bow to a customer. There is no choice with him: he could not bring himself to the latter. I would not consent to his going alone;—no—but that objection is done away with: he will marry before he sets sail a young lady¹ he has known for several years, of a nature liberal and high-spirited enough to follow him to the banks of the Mississippi. He will set off in a month or six weeks, and you will see how I should wish to pass that time with him.—And then I must set out on a journey of my own. Brown and I are going a pedestrian tour through the north of England and Scotland as far as John o'Grot's. I have this morning such a lethargy that I cannot write. The reason of my delaying is oftentimes from this feeling,—I wait for a proper temper. Now you ask for an immediate answer, I do not like to wait even till to-morrow. However, I am now so depressed that I have not an idea to put to paper—my hand feels like lead—and yet it is an unpleasant numbness; it does not take away the pain of Existence. I don't know what to write.

Monday [1 June].—You see how I have delayed; and even now I have but a confused idea of what I should be about. My intellect must be in a degenerating state—it must be—for when I should be writing about—God knows what—I am troubling you with moods of my own mind, or rather body, for mind there is none. I am in that temper that if I were under water I would scarcely kick to come up to the top—I know very well 'tis all nonsense. In a short time I hope I shall be in a temper to feel sensibly your mention of my book. In vain have I waited till Monday to have any Interest in that, or anything

¹ Georgiana Augusta Wylie.

else. I feel no spur at my Brother's going to America, and am almost stony-hearted about his wedding. All this will blow over. All I am sorry for is having to write to you in such a time—but I cannot force my letters in a hotbed. I could not feel comfortable in making sentences for you. I am your debtor—I must ever remain so—nor do I wish to be clear of any Rational debt: there is a comfort in throwing oneself on the charity of one's friends—'tis like the albatross sleeping on its wings. I will be to you wine in the cellar, and the more modestly, or rather, indolently, I retire into the backward bin, the more Falerne will I be at the drinking. There is one thing I must mention—my Brother talks of sailing in a fortnight—if so I will most probably be with you a week before I set out for Scotland. The middle of your first page should be sufficient to rouse me. What I said is true, and I have dreamt of your mention of it, and my not answering it has weighed on me since. If I come, I will bring your letter, and hear more fully your sentiments on one or two points. I will call about the Lectures at Taylor's, and at Little Britain, to-morrow. Yesterday I dined with Hazlitt, Barnes, and Wilkie, at Haydon's. The topic was the Duke of Wellington—very amusingly pro-and-con'd. Reynolds has been getting much better; and Rice may begin to crow, for he got a little so-so at a party of his, and was none the worse for it the next morning. I hope I shall soon see you, for we must have many new thoughts and feelings to analyse, and to discover whether a little more knowledge has not made us more ignorant.

Yours affectionately
John Keats

LVIII.

To the MISSES M. AND S. JEFFREY.

Teignmouth.

Hampstead, June 4th [1818].

My dear Girls,

I will not pretend to string a list of excuses together for not having written before—but must at once confess the indolence of my disposition, which makes a letter more formidable to me than a Pilgrimage. I am a fool in delay for the idea of neglect is an everlasting Knapsack which even now I have scarce power to hoist off. By the bye talking of everlasting Knapsacks I intend to make my fortune by them in case of a War (which you must consequently pray for) by contracting with Government for said materials to the economy of one branch of the Revenue. At all events a Tax which is taken from the people and shoulder'd upon the Military ought not to

be snubb'd at. I promised to send you all the news. Harkee! The whole city corporation, with a deputation from the Fire Offices are now engaged at the London Coffee house in secret conclave concerning Saint Paul's Cathedral its being washed clean. Many interesting speeches have been demosthenized in said Coffee house as to the Cause of the black appearance of the said Cathedral. One of the veal-thigh Aldermen actually brought up three Witnesses to depose how they beheld the ci-devant fair Marble turn black on the tolling of the great Bell for the amiable and tea-table-lamented Princess—adding moreover that this sort of sympathy in inanimate objects was by no means uncommon for said the Gentleman “As we were once debating in the Common Hall Mr. Waithman in illustration of some case in point quoted Peter Pindar, at which the head of George the third although in hard marble squinted over the Mayor's seat at the honorable speaker so oddly that he was obliged to sit down.” However I will not tire you about these Affairs for they must be in your Newspapers by this time. You see how badly I have written these last three lines so I will remain here and take a pinch of snuff every five Minutes until my head becomes fit and proper and legitimately inclined to scribble—Oh! there's nothing like a pinch of snuff except perhaps a few trifles almost beneath a philosopher's dignity, such as a ripe Peach or a Kiss that one takes on a lease of 91 moments—on a building lease. Talking of that is the Capⁿ married yet, or rather married Miss Mitchel¹—is she stony hearted enough to hold out this season? Has the Doctor given Miss Perryman a little love powder?—tell him to do so. It really would not be unamusing to see her languish a little—Oh she must be quite melting this hot Weather. Are the little Robins weaned yet? Do they walk alone? You have had a christening a top o' the tiles and a Hawk has stood God father and taken the little Brood under the Shadows of its Wings much in the way of Mother Church—a Cat too has very tender bowels in such pathetic Cases. They say we are all (that is our set) mad at Hampstead. There's George took unto himself a Wife a Week ago and will in a little time sail for America—and I with a friend am preparing for a four Months Walk all over the North—and belike Tom will not stop here—he has been getting much better—Lord what a Journey I had and what a relief at the end of it—I'm sure I could not have stood it many more days. Hampstead is now in fine order. I suppose Teignmouth and the *contagious* country is now quite remarkable—you might praise it I dare say in the manner of a grammatical exercise—*The trees are full—the den*²

¹ Captain (afterwards Sir Warwick) Tonkin *did* marry Miss Mitchell. The name 'Perryman' should be 'Periman'.

² The open space between the sea and the houses facing it is still called the Den.

is crowded—the boats *are* sailing—the musick *is* playing. I wish you were here a little while—but lauk we haven't got any female friend in the house. Tom is taken for a Madman and I being somewhat stunted am taken for nothing—We lounge on the Walk opposite as you might on the Den—I hope the fine season will keep up your Mother's Spirits—she was used to be too much down hearted. No Women ought to be born into the world for they may not touch the bottle for shame—now a Man may creep into a bung hole—However this is a tale of a tub—however I like to play upon a pipe sitting upon a puncheon and intend to be so drawn in the frontispiece to my next book of Pastorals—My Brothers' respects and mine to your Mother and all our Loves to you.

Yours very sincerely
John Keats

P.S. has many significations—here it signifies Post Script—on the corner of a Handkerchief Polly Saunders—Upon a Garter Pretty Secret—Upon a Band Box Pink Sattin—At the Theatre Princes Side—on a Pulpit Parson's Snuffle—and at a Country Ale House Pail Sider.

LIX.

To BENJAMIN BAILEY.

London,
10 June 1818.

My dear Bailey,

I have been very much gratified and very much hurt by your letters in the Oxford Paper¹; because independent of that unlawful and mortal feeling of pleasure at praise, there is a glory in enthusiasm; and because the world is malignant enough to chuckle at the most honourable Simplicity. Yes, on my soul, my dear Bailey, you are too simple for the world—and that Idea makes me sick of it. How is it that, by extreme opposites, we have, as it were, got discontented nerves? You have all your life (I think so) believed everybody. I have suspected everybody. And, although you have been so deceived, you make a simple appeal—the world has something else to do, and I am glad of it. Were it in my choice, I would reject a Petrarchal coronation—on account of my dying day, and because women have cancers. I should not by rights speak in this tone to you for it is an incendiary spirit that would do so. Yet I am not old enough or magnanimous enough to annihilate self—and it would perhaps be paying you an ill compliment. I was in hopes some little time back to be able to relieve your dulness by my spirits—to point out things in the world worth your enjoyment—and

¹ See Biographical Memoranda concerning Correspondents—the section about Bailey.

now I am never alone without rejoicing that there is such a thing as death—without placing my ultimate in the glory of dying for a great human purpose. Perhaps if my affairs were in a different state, I should not have written the above—you shall judge: I have two brothers; one is driven, by the “burden of Society,” to America; the other with an exquisite love of life, is in a lingering state. My love for my Brothers, from the early loss of our parents, and even from earlier misfortunes, has grown into an affection “passing the love of women.” I have been ill-tempered with them—I have vexed them—but the thought of them has always stifled the impression that any woman might otherwise have made upon me. I have a sister too, and may not follow them either to America or to the grave. Life must be undergone, and I certainly derive some consolation from the thought of writing one or two more poems before it ceases.

I have heard some hints of your retiring to Scotland—I should like to know your feeling on it—it seems rather remote. Perhaps Gleig will have a duty near you. I am not certain whether I shall be able to go any journey, on account of my Brother Tom, and a little indisposition of my own. If I do not you shall see me soon, if not on my return, or I’ll quarter myself on you next winter. I had known my sister-in-law some time before she was my sister, and was very fond of her. I like her better and better. She is the most disinterested woman I ever knew—that is to say, she goes beyond degree in it. To see an entirely disinterested girl quite happy is the most pleasant and extraordinary thing in the world. It depends upon a thousand circumstances. On my word it is extraordinary. Women must want imagination, and they may thank God for it; and so may we, that a delicate being can feel happy without any sense of crime. It puzzles me, and I have no sort of logic to comfort me—I shall think it over. I am not at home, and your letter being there I cannot look it over to answer any particular—only I must say I feel that passage of Dante. If I take any book with me it shall be those minute volumes of Carey, for they will go into the aptest corner.

Reynolds is getting, I may say, robust, his illness has been of service to him—like every one just recovered, he is high-spirited. I hear also good accounts of Rice. With respect to domestic literature, the Edinburgh Magazine, in another blow-up against Hunt, calls me “the amiable Mister Keats”—and I have more than a laurel from the Quarterly Reviewers for they have smothered me in “Foliage.”¹ I want to read you my

¹ Number 36 of ‘The Quarterly Review,’ published in June 1818, contained a review of the volume of Poems just then issued by Leigh Hunt under the title of ‘Foliage’; and the “other blow-up” was one of the series of articles on the

"Pot of Basil"—if you go to Scotland, I should much like to read it there to you, among the snows of next winter. My Brothers' remembrances to you.

Your affectionate friend
John Keats

LX.

To JOHN TAYLOR.

Sunday evening,
[21 June 1818].

My dear Taylor,

I am sorry I have not had time to call and wish you health till my return. Really I have been hard run these last three days. However, au revoir, God keep us all well! I start to-morrow Morning. My brother Tom will I am afraid be lonely. I can scarcely ask the loan of books for him, since I still keep those you lent me a year ago. If I am overweening, you will I know be indulgent. Therefore when you shall write, do send him some you think will be most amusing—he will be careful in returning them. Let him have one of my books bound. I am ashamed to catalogue these messages. There is but one more, which ought to go for nothing as there is a lady concerned. I promised Mrs. Reynolds one of my books bound. As I cannot write in it let the opposite be pasted in 'prythee. Remember me to Percy St.—Tell Hilton that one gratification on my return will be to find him engaged on a history piece to his own content. And tell Dewint I shall become a disputant on the landscape. Bow for me very genteely to Mrs. D. or she will not admit your diploma. Remember me to Hessey, saying I hope he'll *Carey*¹ his point. I would not forget Woodhouse. Adieu!

Your sincere friend,
John o'Grots.

"Cockney School," which was appearing in 'Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine.' Keats is not expressly mentioned in the 'Quarterly' article; but there are covert references both to him and to Shelley—indicating that the shameful articles on 'Laon and Cythna' and 'Endymion' were probably already in contemplation.

¹ The allusion is of course to some point connected with Cary's Dante, published by Taylor and Hessey and advertized at the end of 'Endymion,' and referred to in the last letter.

LXI.

To THOMAS KEATS.

Well Walk, Hampstead.

Keswick,
June 29 [1818]

My dear Tom,

I cannot make my journal as distinct and actual as I could wish, from having been engaged in writing to George, and therefore I must tell you without circumstance that we proceeded from Ambleside to Rydal, saw the waterfalls there, and called on Wordsworth, who was not at home, nor was any one of his family. I wrote a note and left it on the mantel-piece. Thence on we came to the foot of Helvellyn, where we slept, but could not ascend it for the mist. I must mention that from Rydal we passed Thirlswater, and a fine pass in the Mountains—from Helvellyn we came to Keswick on Derwent Water. The approach to Derwent Water surpassed Windermere—it is richly wooded, and shut in with rich-toned Mountains. From Helvellyn to Keswick was eight miles to breakfast, after which we took a complete circuit of the Lake, going about ten miles, and seeing on our way the fall of Lowdore. I had an easy climb among the streams, about the fragments of Rocks, and should have got I think to the summit, but unfortunately I was damped by slipping one leg into a squashy hole. There is no great body of water, but the accompaniment is delightful; for it oozes out from a cleft in perpendicular Rocks,

LXI. Lord Houghton makes the following observations before the letters from the North which he published in 1848:—"The agreeable diversion to his somewhat monotonous life by a walking-tour through the Lakes and Highlands with his friend Mr. Brown, was now put into execution. They set off in the middle of June for Liverpool, where they parted with George Keats, who embarked with his wife for America. On the road he stopped to see a former fellow-student at Guy's, who was settled as a surgeon in a country town, and whom he informed that he had definitely abandoned that profession and intended to devote himself to poetry. Mr. Stephens remembers that he seemed much delighted with his new sister-in-law, who was a person of most agreeable appearance, and introduced her with evident satisfaction. From Lancaster they started on foot, and Mr. Brown has recorded the rapture of Keats when he became sensible, for the first time, of the full effect of mountain scenery. At a turn of the road above Bowness, where the Lake of Windermere first bursts on the view, he stopped as if stupified with beauty. That evening he read aloud the Poem of the 'Pot of Basil,' which he had just completed. His disappointment at missing Wordsworth was very great, and he hardly concealed his vexation when he found that he owed the privation to the interest which the elder poet was taking in the general Election. This annoyance would perhaps have been diminished if the two poets had happened to be on the same side in politics; but, as it was, no views and objects could be more opposed." The political difference perhaps also accounts for Wordsworth's presence in his mind when composing 'The Gadfly.'

all fledged¹ with ash and other beautiful trees. It is a strange thing how they got there. At the south end of the Lake the Mountains of Borrowdale are perhaps as fine as anything we have seen. On our return from this circuit, we ordered dinner, and set forth about a mile and a half on the Penrith road, to see the Druid temple. We had a fog up hill, rather too near dinner-time, which was rendered void by the gratification of seeing those aged stones on a gentle rise in the midst of the Mountains, which at that time darkened all around, except at the fresh opening of the Vale of St. John. We went to bed rather fatigued, but not so much so as to hinder us getting up this morning to mount Skiddaw. It promised all along to be fair, and we had fagged and tugged nearly to the top, when, at half-past six, there came a Mist upon us, and shut out the view. We did not, however, lose anything by it: we were high enough without mist to see the coast of Scotland—the Irish Sea—the hills beyond Lancaster—and nearly all the large ones of Cumberland and Westmoreland, particularly Helvellyn and Scawfell. It grew colder and colder as we ascended, and we were glad, at about three parts of the way, to taste a little rum which the Guide brought with him, mixed, mind ye, with Mountain water. I took two glasses going and one returning. It is about six miles from where I am writing to the top. So we have walked ten miles before Breakfast to-day. We went up with two others, very good sort of fellows. All felt, on arising into the cold air, that same elevation which a cold bath gives one—I felt as if I were going to a Tournament.

Wordsworth's house is situated just on the rise of the foot of Mount Rydal; his parlour-window looks directly down Windermere; I do not think I told you how fine the Vale of Grasmere is, and how I discovered "the ancient woman seated on Helm Crag."² We shall proceed immediately to Carlisle, intending to enter Scotland on the 1st of July viâ —

¹ Keats was very fond of this now highly fashionable word. Compare this passage with the lines in the Ode to Psyche—

Far, far around shall those dark-clustered trees
Fledge the wild-ridged mountains steep by steep;

and, before he left Scotland, he had arrived at the cognate Leigh-Huntian adjective 'fledgy': see 'Staffa'—

Where a fledgy sea bird choir
Soars for ever...

'Fledge' being already adjective as well as verb, one asks concerning 'fledgy,' why and whence?

² As Keats had by the previous January arrived at the conclusion that 'The Excursion' was one of the "three things to rejoice at in this Age," he cannot have failed to appreciate the lofty quality of Wordsworth's blank verse at its highest level. The beautiful little poem from which he here quotes, in the series

July 1st [1818].—We are this morning at Carlisle. After Skiddaw, we walked to Ireby, the oldest market town in Cumberland, where we were greatly amused by a country dancing-school holden at the Tun, it was indeed “no new cotillion fresh from France.” No, they kickit and jumpit with mettle extraordinary, and whiskit, and friskit, and toed it, and go’d it, and twirl’d it, and whirl’d it, and stamped it, and sweated it, tattooing the floor like mad. The difference between our country dances and these Scottish figures is about the same as leisurely stirring a cup o’ Tea and beating up a batter-pudding. I was extremely gratified to think that, if I had pleasures they knew nothing of, they had also some into which I could not possibly enter. I hope I shall not return without having got the Highland fling. There was as fine a row of boys and girls as you ever saw; some beautiful faces, and one exquisite mouth. I never felt so near the glory of Patriotism, the glory of making by any means a country happier. This is what I like better than scenery. I fear our continued moving from place to place will prevent our becoming learned in village affairs: we are mere creatures of Rivers, Lakes, and Mountains. Our yesterday’s journey was from Ireby to Wigton, and from Wigton to Carlisle. The Cathedral does not appear very fine—the Castle is very ancient, and of brick. The City is very various—old, white-washed narrow streets—broad red-brick ones more modern—I will tell you anon whether the inside of the cathedral is worth looking at. It is built of sandy red stone or Brick. We have now walked 114 miles, and are merely a little

‘On the Naming of Places,’ could not do otherwise than impress him with the Miltonic dignity attained in the passage about the laughter of Joanna, taken up by

that tall rock

Which looks towards the East,

and tossed from crag to crag all round the Vale of Grasmere. When he arrived on the spot he had not forgotten how

That ancient Woman seated on Helm-crag
Was ready with her cavern; Hammer-Scar,
And the tall steep of Silver How sent forth
A noise of laughter; southern Loughrigg heard,
And Fairfield answered with a mountain tone:
Helvellyn far into the clear blue sky
Carried the lady’s voice,—old Skiddaw blew
His speaking-trumpet; back out of the clouds
Of Glaramara southward came the voice;
And Kirkstone tossed it from his misty head.

It can have been but a light task to find the “Ancient Woman”: Wordsworth, in a note to his poem, describes Helm-crag as having on it “a Rock which from most points of view bears a striking resemblance to an Old Woman cowering. Close by the rock,” he adds, “is one of those Fissures or Caverns, which in the language of the Country are called Dungeons.”

tired in the thighs and a little blistered. We shall ride 38 miles to Dumfries, when we shall linger awhile about Nithsdale and Galloway. I have written two letters to Liverpool. I found a letter from sister George; very delightful indeed: I shall preserve it in the bottom of my knapsack for you.

The Town, the churchyard, and the setting sun,
 The Clouds, the trees, the rounded hills all seem,
 Though beautiful, cold—strange—as in a dream,
 I dreamed long ago, now new begun.
 The short-liv'd, paly Summer is but won
 From Winter's ague, for one hour's gleam;
 Though sapphire-warm, their stars do never beam:
 All is cold Beauty; pain is never done:
 For who has mind to relish, Minos-wise,
 The Real of Beauty, free from that dead hue
 Sickly imagination and sick pride
 Cast wan upon it! Burns! with honour due
 I oft have honour'd thee. Great shadow, hide
 Thy face; I sin against thy native skies.

July 2nd [1818].

You will see by this sonnet that I am at Dumfries. We have dined in Scotland. Burns's tomb is in the Churchyard corner, not very much to my taste, though on a scale large enough to show they wanted to honour him. Mrs. Burns lives in this place; most likely we shall see her to-morrow. This sonnet I have written in a strange mood, half-asleep. I know not how it is, the Clouds, the Sky, the Houses, all seem anti-Grecian and anti-Charlemagnish. I will endeavour to get rid of my prejudices and tell you fairly about the Scotch.¹

In Devonshire they say, "Well, where be ye going?"² Here it is, "How is it wi' yoursel?" A man on the Coach, said the horses took a Hellish heap o' drivin'; the same fellow pointed out Burns's Tomb with a deal of life—"There! de ye see it, amang the trees—white, wi' a roond tap?" The first well-dressed Scotchman we had any conversation with, to our surprise confessed himself a Deist. The careful manner of

¹In the memoir of Charles Wentworth Dilke prefixed by his grandson Sir Charles Dilke to 'Papers of a Critic,' it is recorded that Brown wrote thus from Scotland in July 1818 to the subject of the memoir: "Keats has been these five hours abusing the Scotch and their country. He says that the women have large splay feet, which is too true to be controverted, and that he thanks Providence he is not related to a Scot, nor any way connected with them." Brown was himself of Scotch descent; and it would accord with his prevalent humour if this were his own embroidery on the state of mind betrayed in the text.

²This is not accurate: see foot-note to 'The Devon Maid,' at page 210 of the second volume.

delivering his opinions, not before he had received several encouraging hints from us, was very amusing. Yesterday was an immense horse-fair at Dumfries, so that we met numbers of men and women on the road, the women nearly all barefoot, with their shoes and clean stockings in hand, ready to put on and look smart in the Towns. There are plenty of wretched cottages whose smoke has no outlet but by the door. We have now begun upon Whisky, called here "whuskey,"—very smart stuff it is. Mixed like our liquors, with sugar and water, 'tis called toddy; very pretty drink, and much praised by Burns.

LXII.

To FANNY KEATS.

Rich^d Abbey's Esq^{re} Walthamstow.

My dear Fanny,

Dumfries, July 2nd [1818].

I intended to have written to you from Kirk[c]udbright, the town I shall be in to-morrow—but I will write now because my Knapsack has worn my coat in the Seams, my coat has gone to the Taylors¹ and I have but one Coat to my back in these parts. I must tell you how I went to Liverpool with George and our new Sister and the Gentleman my fellow traveller through the Summer and autumn—we had a tolerable journey to Liverpool—which I left the next morning before George was up for Lancaster—Then we set off from Lancaster on foot with our Knapsacks on, and have walked a Little zig zag through the mountains and Lakes of Cumberland and Westmoreland—We came from Carlisle yesterday to this place—We are employed in going up Mountains, looking at strange towns, prying into old ruins and eating very hearty breakfasts. Here we are full in the Midst of broad Scotch "How is it a' wi' yoursel"—the Girls are walking about bare footed and in the worst cottages the smoke finds its way out of the door. I shall come home full of news for you and for fear I should choak you by too great a dose at once I must make you used to it by a letter or two. We have been taken for travelling Jewellers, Razor sellers and Spectacle vendors because friend Brown wears a pair—The first place we stopped at with our Knapsacks contained one Richard Bradshaw, a notorious tippler. He stood in the shape of a $\frac{3}{4}$ and balanced himself as well as he could saying with his nose right in Mr. Brown's face "Do—yo—u sell spect—ta—cles?" Mr. Abbey says we are Don Quixotes—tell him we are more generally taken for Pedlars. All I hope is that we may not be taken for excisemen in this whiskey country. We

¹ Keats constantly wrote Taylor in this old-fashioned way, and did not, I fancy, need the excuse that he was always so spelling his publisher's name.

are generally up about 5 walking before breakfast and we complete our 20 miles before dinner.—Yesterday we visited Burns's Tomb and this morning the fine Ruins of Lincluden.—I had done thus far when my coat came back fortified at all points—so as we lose no time we set forth again through Galloway—all very pleasant and pretty with no fatigue when one is used to it—We are in the midst of Meg Merrilies' country of whom I suppose you have heard.

Old Meg she was a Gipsy,
And liv'd upon the Moors
Her bed it was the brown heath turf
And her house was out of doors

Her apples were swart blackberries
Her currants pods o' broom
Her wine was dew o' the wild white rose
Her book a churchyard tomb

Her Brothers were the craggy hills
Her Sisters larchen trees—
Alone ~~whit~~ with her great family
She liv'd as she did please.

No breakfast had she many a-day-morn
No dinner many a noon,
And 'stead of supper she would stare
Full hard against the Moon.

But every morn of woodbine fresh
She made her garlanding
And every night the dark glen Yew
She wove and she would sing.

And-sometimes with-her fingers-old
And with her fingers old and brown
She plaited Mats o' Rushes
And gave them to the Cottagers
She met among the Bushes.

Old Meg was brave as Margaret Queen
And tall as Amazon :
An old red blanket cloak she wore ;
A chip hat had she on.
God rest her aged bones somewhere—
She died full long ago !

If you like these sort of Ballads I will now and then scribble one for you—if I send any to Tom I'll tell him to send them to you. I have so many interruptions that I cannot manage to

fill a Letter in one day—since I scribbled the song we have walked through a beautiful Country to Kirkcudbright—at which place I will write you a song about myself.

There was a naughty Boy
A naughty boy was he
He would not stop at home
He could not quiet be—
He took
In his Knapsack
A Book
Full of vowels
And a shirt
With some towels—
A slight cap
For night cap—
A hair brush
Comb ditto,
New Stockings
For old ones
Would split O !
This Knapsack
Tight at's back
He rivetted close
And followéd his Nose
To the North
To the North
And follow'd his nose
To the North.

There was a naughty boy
And a naughty boy was he
For nothing would he do
But scribble poetry—
He took
An inkstand
In his hand
And a Pen
Big as ten
In the other
And away
In a Pother
He ran
To the mountains
And fountains
And ghostes
And Postes
And witches

And ditches
And wrote
In his coat
When the weather
Was ~~warm~~ cool
Fear of gout
And without
When the weather
Was ~~cool~~ warm—
Och the charm
When we choose
To follow one's nose
To the north
To the north
To follow one's nose
To the north !

There was a naughty boy
And a naughty boy was he
He kept little fishes
In washing tubs three
In spite
Of the might
Of the Maid
Nor afraid
Of his Granny-good—
He often would
Hurly burly
Get up early
And go
By hook or crook
To the brook
And bring home
Miller's thumb
Tittlebat
Not over fat
Minnows small
As the stall
Of a glove
Not above
The size
Of a nice
Little Baby's
Little finger—
O he made
'Twas his trade
Of Fish a pretty Kettle
A Kettle—A Kettle

Of Fish a pretty Kettle
A Kettle !

There was a naughty Boy,
And a naughty Boy was he
He ran away to Scotland
The people for to see—
Then he found
That the ground
Was as hard
That a yard
Was as long,
That a song
Was as merry,
That a cherry
Was as red—
That lead
Was as weighty
That fourscore
Was as eighty
That a door
Was as wooden
As in england—
So he stood in
His shoes
And he wonderd
He wonderd
He stood in his
Shoes and he wonder'd.

My dear Fanny, I am ashamed of writing you such stuff, nor would I if it were not for being tired after my day's walking, and ready to tumble into bed so fatigued that when I am asleep you might sew my nose to my great toe and trundle me round the town, like a Hoop, without waking me. Then I get so hungry a Ham goes but a very little way and fowls are like Larks to me—A Batch of Bread I make no more ado with than a sheet of parliament ; and I can eat a Bull's head as easily as I used to do Bull's eyes. I take a whole string of Pork Sausages down as easily as a Pen'orth of Lady's fingers. Ah dear I must soon be contented with an acre or two of oaten cake a hogshead of Milk and a Cloaths basket of Eggs morning noon and night when I get among the Highlanders. Before we see them we shall pass into Ireland and have a chat with the Paddies, and look at the Giant's Causeway which you must have heard of—I have not time to tell you particularly for I have to send a Journal to Tom of whom you shall hear all particulars or from me when I return. Since I began this we have walked sixty

miles to Newton Stewart at which place I put in this Letter—to night we sleep at Glenluce—to-morrow at Portpatrick and the next day we shall cross in the passage boat to Ireland. I hope Miss Abbey has quite recovered.—Present my Respects to her and to Mr. and Mrs. Abbey.—God bless you.

Your affectionate Brother John—

Do write me a Letter directed to *Inverness*, Scotland.

LXIII.

To THOMAS KEATS.

Well Walk, Hampstead.

Auchencairn,¹

3 July [1818].

My dear Tom,

We are now in Meg Merrilies' country, and have, this morning, passed through some parts exactly suited to her. Kirkcudbright County is very beautiful, very wild, with craggy hills, somewhat in the Westmoreland fashion. We have come down from Dumfries to the sea-coast part of it. The following song you will have from Dilke, but perhaps you would like it here. . . .²

Yesterday was passed in Kirkcudbright; the country is very rich, very fine, and with a little of Devon. I am now writing at Newton Stewart, six miles into Wigtown. Our landlady of yesterday said "very few Southerners passed hereaways." The children jabber away, as if in a foreign language; the bare-footed girls look very much in keeping,—I mean with the scenery about them. Brown praises their cleanliness and appearance of comfort, the neatness of their cottages, &c.—it may be—they are very squat among trees and fern and heath and broom, on levels, slopes, and heights—but I wish they were as snug as those up the Devonshire valleys. We are lodged and entertained in great varieties. We dined yesterday on dirty bacon, dirtier eggs, and dirtiest potatoes, with a slice of salmon—we breakfast this morning in a nice carpeted room, with sofa, hair-bottomed Chairs, and green-baized Mahogany. A spring by the road-side is always welcome: we drink water for dinner, diluted with a Gill of whisky.

July 6th [1818].—Yesterday morning we set out from Glenluce, going some distance round to see some rivers: they were scarcely worth the while. We went on to Stranraer, in a burning sun, and had gone about six miles when the Mail overtook

¹ Keats wrote 'Auchtercairn'.

² The Meg Merrilies ballad, page 122 *ante*. is here omitted.

us : we got up, were at Port Patrick in a jiffey, and I am writing now in little Ireland. The dialects on the neighbouring shores of Scotland and Ireland are much the same, yet I can perceive a great difference in the nations, from the chambermaid at this *nate toone* kept by Mr. Kelly. She is fair, kind, and ready to laugh, because she is out of the horrible dominion of the Scotch Kirk. A Scotch girl stands in terrible awe of the Elders—poor little Susannahs, they will scarcely laugh, and their Kirk is greatly to be damned. These Kirk-men have done Scotland good (Query?). They have made men, women ; old men, young men ; old women, young women ; boys, girls ; and all infants careful—so that they are formed into regular Phalanges of savers and gainers. Such a thrifty army cannot fail to enrich their Country, and give it a greater appearance of Comfort than that of their [this?] poor rash neighbourhood. These Kirk-men have done Scotland harm ; they have banished puns, and laughing, and kissing, &c. (except in cases where the very danger and crime must make it very gustful). I shall make a full stop at kissing, for after that there should be a better parenthesis, and go on to remind you of the fate of Burns—poor unfortunate fellow, his disposition was Southern—how sad it is when a luxurious imagination is obliged, in self-defence, to deaden its delicacy in vulgarity and in things attainable, that it may not have leisure to go mad after things that are not. No man, in such matters, will be content with the experience of others. It is true that out of suffering there is no dignity, no greatness, that in the most abstracted pleasure there is no lasting happiness. Yet who would not like to discover over again that Cleopatra was a Gipsy, Helen a rogue, and Ruth a deep one? I have not sufficient reasoning faculty to settle the doctrine of thrift, as it is consistent with the dignity of human Society—with the happiness of Cottagers. All I can do is by plump contrasts ; were the fingers made to squeeze a guinea or a white hand?—were the lips made to hold a pen or a kiss? and yet in Cities man is shut out from his fellows if he is poor—the cottager must be very dirty, and very wretched, if she be not thrifty—the present state of society demands this, and this convinces me that the world is very young, and in a very ignorant state. We live in a barbarous age—I would sooner be a wild deer, than a girl under the dominion of the Kirk ; and I would sooner be a wild hog, than be the occasion of a poor Creature's penance before those execrable elders.

It is not so far to the Giant's Causeway as we supposed. We thought it 70, and hear it is only 48 miles—so we shall leave one of our knapsacks here at Donaghadee, take our immediate wants, and be back in a week, when we shall proceed to the County of Ayr. In the Packet yesterday we heard some ballads from two old men. One was a Romance which seemed very

poor—then there was “The Battle of the Boyne,” then “Robin Huid,” as they call him—“Before the King you shall go, go, go ; before the King you shall go.”

July 9th [1818].—We stopped very little in Ireland, and that you may not have leisure to marvel at our speedy return to Port Patrick, I will tell you that it is as dear living in Ireland as at the Hummums¹—thrice the expence of Scotland—it would have cost us £15 before our return ; moreover we found those 48 miles to be Irish ones, which reach to 70 English—so having walked to Belfast one day, and back to Donaghadee the next, we left Ireland with a fair breeze. We slept last night at Port Patrick, when I was gratified by a letter from you. On our walk in Ireland, we had too much opportunity to see the worse than nakedness, the rags, the dirt and misery of the poor common Irish. A Scotch cottage, though in that sometimes the smoke has no exit but at the door, is a palace to an Irish one. We could observe the impetuosity in Man and Woman. We had the pleasure of finding our way through a Peat-bog, three miles long at least—dreary, flat, dank, black, and spongy—here and there were poor dirty Creatures, and a few strong men cutting or carting Peat. We heard on passing into Belfast through a most wretched suburb, that most disgusting of all noises, worse than the Bagpipes—the laugh of a monkey—the chatter of women—the scream of a Macaw—I mean the sound of the Shuttle. What a tremendous difficulty is the improvement of such people. I cannot conceive how a mind “*with child*” of philanthropy could grasp at its possibility—with me it is absolute despair.

At a miserable house of entertainment, half-way between Donaghadee and Belfast, were two men sitting at Whisky—one a labourer, and the other I took to be a drunken weaver—the labourer took me to be a Frenchman, and the other hinted at bounty-money ; saying he was ready to take it. On calling for the letters at Port Patrick, the man snapped out “what regiment?” On our return from Belfast we met a sedan—the Duchess of Dunghill. It is no laughing matter though. Imagine the worst dog-kennel you ever saw, placed upon two poles from a mouldy fencing. In such a wretched thing sat a squalid old woman, squat like an ape half-starved, from a scarcity of biscuit in its passage from Madagascar to the Cape, with a pipe in her mouth, and looking out with a round-eyed, skinny-lidded inanity ; with a sort of horizontal idiotic movement of her head—squat and lean she sat, and puffed out the smoke, while two ragged, tattered girls carried her along. What a thing would be a history of her life and sensations ; I shall endeavour when I have thought a little more, to give you my idea of the

¹This once renowned London hotel still exists, in the Piazza, Covent Garden.

difference between the Scotch and Irish.¹ The two Irishmen I mentioned were speaking of their treatment in England, when the weaver said—"Ah! you were a civil man, but I was a drinker."

Till further notice, you must direct to Inverness.

Your most affectionate Brother

John

LXIV.

To JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS.

Maybole.

11 July [1818].

My dear Reynolds,

I'll not run over the ground we have passed; that would be merely as bad as telling a dream—unless, perhaps, I do it in the manner of the Laputan printing press—that is, I put down Mountains, Rivers, Lakes, dells, glens, Rocks and Clouds, with beautiful, enchanting, Gothic, picturesque,—fine, delightful, enchanting, grand, sublime—a few blisters, &c.—and now you have our journey thus far: where I begin a letter to you because I am approaching Burns's cottage very fast. We have made continual inquiries from the time we saw his tomb at Dumfries—his name of course is known all about—his great reputation among the plodding people is, "that he wrote a good *mony* sensible things." One of the pleasantest means of annulling self is approaching such a shrine as the Cottage of Burns—we need not think of his misery—that is all gone, bad luck to it—I shall look upon it hereafter with unmixed pleasure, as I do upon my Stratford-on-Avon day with Bailey. I shall fill this sheet for you in the Bardie's country, going no further than this till I get to the town of Ayr which will be a nine miles' walk to Tea.

[13 July 1818?]

We were talking on different and indifferent things when, on a sudden, we turned a corner upon the immediate country of Ayr—the sight was as rich as possible. I had no Conception that the native place of Burns was so beautiful—the idea I had was more desolate, his "Rigs of Barley" seemed always to me but a few strips of Green on a cold hill—O prejudice! it was as rich as Devon—I endeavoured to drink in the Prospect, that I might spin it out to you, as the Silkworm makes silk from Mulberry leaves—I cannot recollect it. Besides all the Beauty, there were the mountains of Arran Isle, black and huge over the sea. We came down upon everything suddenly—there were in

¹ See Letter LXV,—the part dated the 11th of July 1818.

our way the "bonny Doon," with the Brig that Tam o' Shanter crossed, Kirk Alloway, Burns's Cottage, and the Brigs of Ayr. First we stood upon the Bridge across the Doon; surrounded by every Phantasy of green in Tree, Meadow, and Hill,—the stream of the Doon, as a Farmer told us, is covered with trees "from head to foot"¹—you know those beautiful heaths so fresh against the weather of a summer's evening—there was one stretching along behind the trees.

I wish I knew always the humour my friends would be in at opening a letter of mine, to suit it to them as nearly as possible. I could always find an egg-shell for Melancholy, and as for Merriment a Witty humour will turn anything to Account. My head is sometimes in such a whirl in considering the million likings and antipathies of our Moments—that I can get into no settled strain in my Letters. My Wig! Burns and sentimentality coming across you and Frank Floodgate² in the office—O Scenery that thou shouldst be crushed between two

¹ I have heard a Scot, far from illiterate, describe a smoked salmon as "split from head till foot."

² Mr. Dilke records that Reynolds was originally a clerk in an Insurance Office in Serjeant's Inn. "Rice," he says, "suggested that he should become a lawyer, and his relation, Mr. Fladgate,—himself a literary man in early life and editor of the 'Sun' newspaper—consented to receive him as an Articled Pupil, and dear generous noble James Rice—the best, and in his quaint way one of the wittiest and wisest men I ever knew—paid the fee or stamp or whatever it is called—about £110 I believe—and promised if he ever succeeded to his father's business to take him in partner. He not only kept his word, but in a few years gave up the business to him. Reynolds unhappily threw away this certain fortune. The Frank Fladgate here mentioned was Mr. Fladgate's eldest son, then Articled to his father." Mr. Dilke adds that Lady Dryden left Frank Fladgate her fortune. To return for a moment to Reynolds—I presume it was on the occasion above explained that he wrote in the copy of Shakespeare's Poems which he afterwards gave to Keats (and in which Keats wrote his last sonnet) his own—

FAREWELL TO THE MUSES.

I have no chill despondence that I am
 Self banished from those rolls of honouring men
 That keep a temperate eye on airy Fame
 And write songs to her with a golden pen.
 I do not wail because the Muses keep
 Their secrets on the top of Helicon
 Nor do I in my wayward moments weep
 That from my youth Romance is past and gone.
 My boat is trimm'd—my sail is set—And I
 Shall coast the shallows of the tide of Time
 And rest me happily—where others lie,
 Who pass oblivious days. No feelings climb
 Ambitiously within me. Sweet Farewell
 Be to these Nymphs that on the old Hill dwell.

14 Feb. 1818.

J. H. R.

It was a characteristic joke to date this charming sonnet on St. Valentine's Day.

Puns! As for them I venture the rascalliest in the Scotch Region—I hope Brown does not put them punctually in his journal—if he does I must sit on the cutty-stool all next winter. We went to Kirk Alloway—"a Prophet is no Prophet in his own Country." We went to the Cottage and took some Whisky. I wrote a sonnet for the mere sake of writing some lines under the roof—they are so bad I cannot transcribe them. The Man at the Cottage was a great Bore with his Anecdotes—I hate the rascal—his life consists in fuz, fuzzy, fuzziest. He drinks glasses five for the Quarter and twelve for the hour—he is a mahogany-faced old Jackass who knew Burns. He ought to have been kicked for having spoken to him. He calls himself "a curious old Bitch"—but he is a flat old dog—I should like to employ Caliph Vathek to kick him. O the flummery of a birthplace! Cant! cant! cant! It is enough to give a spirit the guts-ache. Many a true word, they say, is spoken in jest—this may be because his gab hindered my sublimity: the flat dog made me write a flat sonnet. My dear Reynolds—I cannot write about scenery and visitings—Fancy is indeed less than a present palpable reality, but it is greater than remembrance—you would lift your eyes from Homer only to see close before you the real Isle of Tenedos—you would rather read Homer afterwards than remember yourself. One song of Burns's is of more worth to you than all I could think for a whole year in his native country. His Misery is a dead weight upon the nimbleness of one's quill—I tried to forget it—to drink Toddy without any Care—to write a merry sonnet—it won't do—he talked with Bitches—he drank with blackguards, he was miserable. We can see horribly clear, in the works of such a Man his whole life, as if we were God's spies. What were his addresses to Jean in the latter part of his life? I should not speak so to you—yet why not—you are not in the same case—you are in the right path, and you shall not be deceived. I have spoken to you against Marriage, but it was general—the Prospect in those matters has been to me so blank, that I have not been unwilling to die—I would not now, for I have inducements to Life—I must see my little Nephews in America, and I must see you marry your lovely Wife. My sensations are sometimes deadened for weeks together—but believe me I have more than once yearned for the time of your happiness to come, as much as I could for myself after the lips of Juliet. From the tenor of my occasional rhodomontade in chit-chat, you might have been deceived concerning me in these points—upon my soul, I have been getting more and more close to you, every day, ever since I knew you, and now one of the first pleasures I look to is your happy Marriage—the more, since I have felt the pleasure of loving a sister in Law. I did not think it possible to become so much attached in so short a time. Things like these, and they are

real, have made me resolve to have a care of my health—you must be as careful.

The rain has stopped us to-day at the end of a dozen Miles, yet we hope to see Loch Lomond the day after to-morrow;—I will piddle out my information, as Rice says, next Winter, at any time when a substitute is wanted for Vingt-un. We bear the fatigue very well—20 miles a day in general. A cloud came over us in getting up Skiddaw—I hope to be more lucky in Ben Lomond—and more lucky still in Ben Nevis. What I think you would enjoy is poking about Ruins, sometimes Abbey, sometimes Castle.

The short stay we made in Ireland has left few remembrances—but an old woman¹ in a dog-kennel Sedan with a pipe in her Mouth, is what I can never forget—I wish I may be able to give you an idea of her.—Remember me to your Mother and Sisters, and tell your Mother how I hope she will pardon me for having a scrap of paper pasted in the Book sent to her.² I was driven on all sides and had not time to call on Taylor.—So Bailey is coming to Cumberland—well, if you'll let me know where at Inverness, I will call on my return and pass a little time with him—I am glad 'tis not Scotland.

Tell my friends I do all I can for them, that is, drink their healths in Toddy. Perhaps I may have some lines by and by to send you fresh, on your own Letter—Tom has a few to show you.

Your affectionate friend
John Keats

LXV.

To THOMAS KEATS.

Well Walk, Hampstead.

Ballantrae³, July 10
[Postmark, Glasgow, 14 July 1818].

Ah ! ken ye what I met the day
Out oore the Mountains
A coming down by craggi[e]s grey
An mossie fountains—
Ah goud hair'd Marie yeve I pray
Ane minute's guessing—
For that I met upon the way
Is past expressing.

¹ "The Duchess of Dunhill" : see page 128 *ante*.

² A copy of *Endymion*, with "from the Author" written on a scrap of paper left in London to be pasted in.

³ Keats wrote 'Belantree'.

As I stood where a rocky brig
A torrent crosses
I spied upon a misty rig
A troupe o' Horses—
And as they trotted down the glen
I sped to meet them
To see if I might know the Men
To stop and greet them.
First Willie on his sleek mare came
At canting gallop
His long hair rustled like a flame
On board a shallop.
Then came his brother Rab and then
Young Peggy's Mither
And Peggy too—adown the glen
They went together—
I saw her wrappit in her hood
Fra wind and raining—
Her cheek was flush wi' timid blood
Twixt growth and waning—
She turn'd her dazed head full oft
For there her Brithers
Came riding with her Bridegroom soft
And mony ithers.
Young Tam came up an' eyed me quick
With reddened cheek—
Braw Tam was daffed like a chick—
He coud na speak—
Ah Marie they are all gane hame
Through blustering weather
An' every heart is full on flame
An' light as feather.
Ah ! Marie they are all gone hame
Fra happy wedding,
Whilst I—Ah is it not a shame?
Sad tears am shedding.

My dear Tom,

The reason for my writing these lines was that Brown wanted to impose a Galloway song upon Dilke—but it won't do. The subject I got from meeting a wedding just as we came down into this place—where I am afraid we shall be imprisoned awhile by the weather. Yesterday we came 27 Miles from Stranraer—entered Ayrshire a little beyond Cairn, and had our path through a delightful Country. I shall endeavour that you may follow our steps in this walk—it would be uninteresting in a Book of Travels—it can not be interesting but by my having gone through it. When we left Cairn our Road lay half way up

the sides of a green mountainous shore, full of clefts of verdure and eternally varying—sometimes up sometimes down, and over little Bridges going across green chasms of moss, rock and trees—winding about every where. After two or three Miles of this we turned suddenly into a magnificent glen finely wooded in Parts—seven Miles long—with a Mountain stream winding down the Midst—full of cottages in the most happy situations—the sides of the Hills covered with sheep—the effect of cattle lowing I never had so finely. At the end we had a gradual ascent and got among the tops of the Mountains whence in a little time I descried in the Sea Ailsa Rock 940 feet high—it was 15 Miles distant and seemed close upon us. The effect of Ailsa with the peculiar perspective of the Sea in connection with the ground we stood on, and the misty rain then falling gave me a complete Idea of a deluge. Ailsa struck me very suddenly—really I was a little alarmed.

Thus far had I written before we set out this morning. Now we are at Girvan 13 Miles north of Ballantrae. Our Walk has been along a more grand shore to-day than yesterday—Ailsa beside us all the way.—From the heights we could see quite at home Cantire and the large Mountains of Annan, one of the Hebrides. We are in comfortable Quarters. The Rain we feared held up bravely and it has been “fu fine this day.”—To-morrow we shall be at Ayr.

To Ailsa Rock.

Hearken, thou craggy ocean pyramid !
 Give answer from thy voice, the sea-fowls' screams !
 When were thy shoulders mantled in huge streams ?
 When, from the sun, was thy broad forehead hid ?
 How long is't since the mighty power bid
 Thee heave to airy sleep from fathom dreams ?
 Sleep in the lap of thunder or sunbeams,
 Or when grey clouds are thy cold coverlid.
 Thou answer'st not ; for thou art dead asleep ;
 Thy life is but two dead eternities—
 The last in air, the former in the deep ;
 First with the whales, last with the eagle-skies—
 Drown'd wast thou till an earthquake made thee steep,
 Another cannot wake thy giant size.

This is the only Sonnet of any worth I have of late written—I hope you will like it.

[11 July 1818.]

'Tis now the 11th of July and we have come 8 Miles to Breakfast to Kirkoswald. I hope the next Kirk will be Kirk Alloway. I have nothing of consequence to say now concerning

our journey—so I will speak as far as I can judge on the Irish and Scotch—I know nothing of the higher Classes—yet I have a persuasion that there the Irish are victorious. As to the “*Profanum vulgus*” I must incline to the Scotch. They never laugh—but they are always comparatively neat and clean. Their constitutions are not so remote and puzzling as the Irish. The Scotchman will never give a decision on any point—he will never commit himself in a sentence which may be referred to as a meridian in his notion of things—so that you do not know him—and yet you may come in nigher neighbourhood to him than to the Irishman who commits himself in so many places that it dazes your head. A Scotchman’s motive is more easily discovered than an Irishman’s. A Scotchman will go wisely about to deceive you, an Irishman cunningly. An Irishman would bluster out of any discovery to his disadvantage. A Scotchman would retire perhaps without much desire for revenge. An Irishman likes to be thought a gallous fellow. A Scotchman is contented with himself. It seems to me they are both sensible of the Character they hold in England and act accordingly to Englishmen. Thus the Scotchman will become over grave and over decent and the Irishman over-impetuous. I like a Scotchman best because he is less of a bore—I like the Irishman best because he ought to be more comfortable.—The Scotchman has made up his Mind with himself in a sort of snail shell wisdom. The Irishman is full of strongheaded instinct. The Scotchman is farther in Humanity than the Irishman—there he will stick perhaps when the Irishman will be refined beyond him—for the former thinks he cannot be improved—the latter would grasp at it for ever, place but the good plain before him.

Maybole. Since breakfast we have come only four Miles to dinner, not merely, for we have examined in the way t[wo] Ruins, one of them very fine, called Crossraguel Abbey—there is a winding Staircase to the top of a little Watch Tower.

July 13 [1818]. *Kingswells*. I have been writing to Reynolds—therefore any particulars since Kirkoswald have escaped me—from said Kirk we went to Maybole to dinner—then we set forward to Burness’ town Ayr—the approach to it is extremely fine—quite outwent my expectations—richly meadowed, wooded, heathed and rivuleted—with a grand Sea view terminated by the black Mountains of the isle of Annan. As soon as I saw them so nearly I said to myself “How is it they did not beckon Burns to some grand attempt at Epic.”

The bonny Doon is the sweetest river I ever saw—overhung with fine trees as far as we could see—We stood some time on the Brig across it, over which Tam o’ Shanter fled—we took a pinch of snuff on the Key stone—then we proceeded to the “auld Kirk Alloway.” As we were looking at it a Farmer pointed the spots where Mungo’s Mither hang’d hersel’ and “drunken

Charlie brake's neck's bane."¹ Then we proceeded to the Cottage he was born in—there was a board to that effect by the door side—it had the same effect as the same sort of memorial at Stratford on Avon. We drank some Toddy to Burns's Memory with an old Man who knew Burns—damn him and damn his anecdotes—he was a great bore—it was impossible for a Southron to understand above 5 words in a hundred.—There was something good in his description of Burns's melancholy the last time he saw him. I was determined to write a sonnet in the Cottage—I did—but it was so bad I cannot venture it here.²

Next we walked into Ayr Town and before we went to Tea saw the new Brig and the Auld Brig and Wallace tower. Yesterday we dined with a Traveller. We were talking about Kean. He said he had seen him at Glasgow "in Othello in the Jew, I mean er, er, er, the Jew in Shylock." He got bother'd completely in vague ideas of the Jew in Othello, Shylock in the Jew, Shylock in Othello, Othello in Shylock, the Jew in Othello, &c. &c. &c.—he left himself in a mess at last.—Still satisfied with himself he went to the Window and gave an abortive whistle of some tune or other—it might have been Handel. There is no end to these Mistakes—he'll go and tell people how he has seen "Malvolio in the Countess"—"Twelfth night in Midsummer night's dream"—Bottom in much ado about Nothing—Viola in Barrymore—Antony in Cleopatra—Falstaff in the mouse Trap.—³

July 14 [1818]. We enter'd Glasgow last Evening under the most oppressive Stare a body could feel. When we had crossed the Bridge Brown look'd back and said its whole pop[ulation] had turned [out] to wonder at us—we came on till a drunken Man came up to me—I put him off with my Arm—he returned all up in Arms saying aloud that, "he had seen all foreigners bu-u-ut he never saw the like o' me." I was obliged to mention

¹ By this time he was cross the ford,
Whare in the snaw the chapman smoor'd;
And past the birks and meikle stane,
Whare drunken *Charlie* brak's neck-bane;
And thro' the whins, and by the cairn,
Whare hunters fand the murder'd bairn;
And near the thorn, aboon the well,
Whare *Mungo's* mither hang'd hersel.—'Tam O'Shanter.'

² Lord Houghton gave this paragraph, omitting the references to "drunken Charlie" and "Mungo's mither," as an extract from a letter to Haydon; but I strongly suspect that the extract, having been furnished by Haydon, was assumed to be from a letter to himself. Although Keats might of course have written the identical paragraph twice to different correspondents, it will, I think, be rash to expect another letter to Haydon containing it to come to the surface.

³ *King*. What do you call the play?
Hamlet. The Mouse-trap.

the word Officer and Police before he would desist.—The City of Glasgow I take to be a very fine one—I was astonished to hear it was twice the size of Edinburgh. It is built of Stone and has a much more solid appearance than London. We shall see the Cathedral this morning—they have devilled it into “High Kirk.” I want very much to know the name of the ship George is g[one] in—also what port he will land in—I know nothing a[bout] it. I hope you are leading a quiet Life and gradually improving. Make a long lounge of the whole Summer—by the time the Leaves fall I shall be near you with plenty of confab—there are a thousand things I cannot write. Take care of yourself—I mean in not being vexed or bothered at any thing.

God bless you!

John—

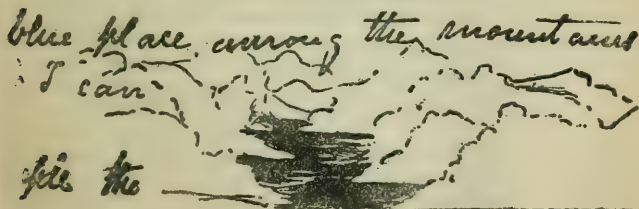
LXVI.

To THOMAS KEATS.

My dear Tom,

Cairn-something July 17th [1818].

Here's Brown going on so that I cannot bring to mind how the two last days have vanished—for example he says The Lady of the Lake went to Rock herself to sleep on Arthur's seat and the Lord of the Isles coming to Press a Piece * * * remembered their last meeting at Corrystone Water so touching her with one hand * * *¹ I told you last how we were stared at in Glasgow—we are not out of the Crowd yet. Steam Boats on Loch Lomond and Barouches on its sides take a little from the Pleasure of such romantic chaps as Brown and I. The Banks of the Clyde are extremely beautiful—the north end of Loch Lomond grand in excess—the entrance at the lower end to the narrow part from a little distance is precious good—the Evening was beautiful nothing could surpass our fortune in the weather—yet was I worldly enough to wish for a fleet of chivalry Barges with Trumpets and Banners just to die away before me into that blue place among the mountains—I must give you an outline as well as I can.



¹ The passages omitted consist of somewhat incoherent strings of place-names arranged apparently with an ulterior view to puns; but the intention is not quite clear, and the sentence ends abruptly without any construction as far as I can make out.

Not[a] B[ene]—the Water was a fine Blue silvered and the Mountains a dark purple, the Sun setting aslant behind them—meantime the head of ben Lomond was covered with a rich Pink Cloud—We did not ascend Ben Lomond—the price being very high and a half a day of rest being quite acceptable. We were up at 4 this morning and have walked to breakfast 15 Miles through two Tremendous Glens—at the end of the first there is a place called rest and be thankful which we took for an Inn—it was nothing but a Stone and so we were cheated into 5 more Miles to Breakfast—I have just been bathing in Loch Fyne a salt water Lake opposite the Windows,—quite pat and fresh but for the cursed Gad flies—damn 'em they have been at me ever since I left the swan and two necks.

All gentle folks who owe a grudge
To any living thing
Open your ears and stay your t[r]udge
Whilst I in dudgeon sing.

The Gadfly he hath stung me sore—
O may he ne'er sting you !
But we have many a horrid bore
He may sting black and blue.

Has any here an old grey Mare
With three legs all her store,
O put it to her Buttocks bare
And straight she'll run on four.

Has any here a Lawyer suit
Of 1743,¹
Take Lawyer's nose and put it to't
And you the end will see.

Is there a Man in Parliament
Dumb-founder'd in his speech,
O let his neighbour make a rent
And put one in his breech.

O Lowther how much better thou
Hadst figur'd t'other day
When to the folks thou mad'st a bow
And hadst no more to say

If lucky Gadfly had but ta'en
His seat upon thine A—e
And put thee to a little pain
To save thee from a worse.

¹ Pronounce 'Seventeen Forty-three'—not 'Seventeen hundred and forty-three.

Better than Southey it had been,
Better than Mr. D——,
Better than Wordsworth too, I ween,
Better than Mr. V——.

Forgive me pray good people all
For deviating so—
In spirit sure I had a call—
And now I on will go.

Has any here a daughter fair
Too fond of reading novels,
Too apt to fall in love with care
And charming Mister Lovels,

O put a Gadfly to that thing
She keeps so white and pert—
I mean the finger for the ring,
And it will breed a wort.

Has any here a pious spouse
Who seven times a day
Scolds as King David pray'd, to chouse
And have her holy way—

O let a Gadfly's little sting
Persuade her sacred tongue
That noises are a common thing,
But that her bell has rung.

And as this is the summum bo-
num of all conquering,
I leave "withouten wordes mo"
The Gadfly's little sting.

Last Evening we came round the End of Loch Fyne to Inverary—the Duke of Argyle's Castle is very modern magnificent and more so from the place it is in—the woods seem old enough to remember two or three changes in the Craggs about them—the Lake was beautiful and there was a Band at a distance by the Castle. I must say I enjoyed two or three common tunes—but nothing could stifle the horrors of a solo on the Bag-pipe—I thought the Beast would never have done.—Yet was I doomed to hear another.—On entering Inverary we saw a Play Bill. Brown was knocked up from new shoes—so I went to the Barn alone where I saw the Stranger accompanied by a Bag-pipe. There they went on about interesting creators and human nater till the Curtain fell and then came the Bag-pipe. When Mrs. Haller fainted down went the Curtain and out came the Bag-pipe—at the heartrending, shoemending

reconciliation the Piper blew amain. I never read or saw this play before ; not the Bag-pipe nor the wretched players themselves were little in comparison with it—thank heaven it has been scoffed at lately almost to a fashion.

Of late two dainties were before me plac'd
 Sweet, holy, pure, sacred and innocent,
 From the ninth sphere to me benignly sent
 That Gods might know my own particular taste :
 First the soft Bag-pipe mourn'd with zealous haste,
 The Stranger next with head on bosom bent
 Sigh'd ; rueful again the piteous Bag-pipe went,
 Again the Stranger sighings fresh did waste.

O Bag-pipe thou didst steal my heart away—
 O Stranger thou my nerves from Pipe didst charm—
 O Bag-pipe thou didst re-assert thy sway—
 Again thou Stranger gav'st me fresh alarm—
 Alas ! I could not choose. Ah ! my poor heart
 Mum chance art thou with both oblig'd to part.

I think we are the luckiest fellows in Christendom—Brown could not proceed this morning on account of his feet and lo there is thunder and rain.

July 20th [1818]. For these two days past we have been so badly accommodated more particularly in coarse food that I have not been at all in cue to write. Last night poor Brown with his feet blistered and scarcely able to walk, after a trudge of 20 Miles down the side of Loch Awe had no supper but Eggs and Oat Cake—we have lost the sight of white bread entirely—Now we had eaten nothing but Eggs all day—about 10 a piece and they had become sickening—To-day we have fared rather better—but no oat Cake wanting—we had a small Chicken and even a good bottle of Port but all together the fare is too coarse—I feel it a little.—Another week will break us in. I forgot to tell you that when we came through Glenside it was early in the morning and we were pleased with the noise of Shepherds, Sheep and dogs in the misty heights close above us—we saw none of them for some time, till two came in sight creeping among the Craggs like Emmets, yet their voices came quite plainly to us—The approach to Loch Awe was very solemn towards nightfall—the first glance was a streak of water deep in the Bases of large black Mountains.—We had come along a complete mountain road, where if one listened there was not a sound but that of Mountain Streams. We walked 20 Miles by the side of Loch Awe—every ten steps creating a new and beautiful picture—sometimes through little wood—there are two islands on the Lake each with a beautiful ruin—one of them rich in ivy.—We are detained this morning by the rain. I will

tell you exactly where we are. We are between Loch Craignish and the sea just opposite Long Island.¹ Yesterday our walk was of this description—the near Hills were not very lofty but many of them steep, beautifully wooded—the distant Mountains in the Hebrides very grand, the Saltwater Lakes coming up between Crags and Islands full tide and scarcely ruffled—sometimes appearing as one large Lake, sometimes as three distinct ones in different directions. At one point we saw afar off a rocky opening into the main sea.—We have also seen an Eagle or two. They move about without the least motion of Wings when in an indolent fit.—I am for the first time in a country where a foreign Language is spoken—they gabble away Gaelic at a vast rate—numbers of them speak English. There are not many Kilts in Argyshire—at Fort William they say a Man is not admitted into Society without one—the Ladies there have a horror at the indecency of Breeches. I cannot give you a better idea of Highland Life than by describing the place we are in. The Inn or public is by far the best house in the immediate neighbourhood. It has a white front with tolerable windows—the table I am writing on surprises me as being a nice flapped Mahogany one; at the same time the place has no watercloset nor any thing like it. You may if you peep see through the floor chinks into the ground rooms. The old Grandmother of the house seems intelligent though not over clean. N.B. No snuff being to be had in the village she made us some. The Guid Man is a rough looking hardy stout Man who I think does not speak so much English as the Guid wife who is very obliging and sensible and moreover though stockingless has a pair of old Shoes—Last night some Whisky Men sat up clattering Gaelic till I am sure one o’Clock to our great annoyance. There is a Gaelic Testament on the Drawers in the next room. White and blue China ware has crept all about here—Yesterday there passed a Donkey laden with tin-pots—opposite the Window there are hills in a Mist—a few Ash trees and a mountain stream at a little distance.—They possess a few head of Cattle.—If you had gone round to the back of the House just now—you would have seen more hills in a Mist—some dozen wretched black Cottages scented of peat smoke which finds its way by the door or a hole in the roof—a girl here and there barefoot. There was one little thing driving Cows down a slope like a mad thing. There was another standing at the cowhouse door rather pretty fac’d all up to the ankles in dirt.² We have walk’d 15 Miles in a soaking rain to Oban opposite the Isle of

¹ Mr. Colvin identifies the place as Kilmelfort (‘Letters of John Keats to his Family and Friends,’ 1891, page 140), with the island of Luing in sight, to the east of Scarba Sound.

² The next sentence was probably written on July 21.

Mull which is so near Staffa—we had thought to pass to it—but the expense is 7 Guineas and those rather extorted.—Staffa you see is a fashionable place and therefore every one concerned with it either in this town or the Island are what you call up. 'Tis like paying sixpence for an apple at the playhouse—this irritated me and Brown was not best pleased—we have therefore resolved to set northward for Fort William to-morrow morning. I fed upon a bit of white Bread to-day like a Sparrow—it was very fine—I cannot manage the cursed Oat Cake. Remember me to all and let me hear a good account of you at Inverness. I am sorry Georgy had not those lines. Good bye.

Your affectionate Brother

John ———

LXVII.

TO BENJAMIN BAILEY.

Inverary,
July 18 [1818].

My dear Bailey,

The only day I have had a chance of seeing you when you were last in London I took every advantage of—some devil led you out of the way. Now I have written to Reynolds to tell me where you will be in Cumberland—so that I cannot miss you. And when I see you, the first thing I shall do will be to read that about Milton and Ceres, and Proserpine¹—yet

LXVII. Lord Houghton remarks justly that a part of this letter “illustrates, with singular felicity, the peculiar action of a high imagination on the ordinary relations of the sexes. The youthful companions of Keats,” continues his Lordship, “who saw how gentle and courteous was his manner to women, and who held the common belief that every Poet was essentially sentimental, could not comprehend his frequent avoidance of female society, and the apparent absence of any engrossing passion; the pardonable conceit of conscious genius suggested itself to them as the probable cause of this defective sympathy, and, when he manifested an occasional interest in any one person, it was attributed rather to satisfied vanity than to awakened love. But the careful study of the poetical character at once disproves these superficial interpretations, and the simple statement of his own feelings by such a man as Keats is a valuable addition to our knowledge of the most delicate and wonderful of the works of Nature—a Poet's heart. For the time was at hand, when one intense affection was about to absorb his entire being, and to hasten, by its very violence, the calamitous extinction against which it struggled in vain.”

¹ The passage in Book IV of *Paradise Lost* (lines 268-72)—

Not that faire field
Of *Enna*, where *Proserpin* gathering flours,
Her self a fairer Floure by gloomie *Dis*
Was gatherd, which cost *Ceres* all that pain
To seek her through the world—

is described by Keats in his Notes on Milton as exclusively Miltonic without the shadow of another mind ancient or modern. It may be that the point was discussed between Keats and Bailey.

though I am not going after you to John o' Grot's, it will be but poetical to say so. And here, Bailey, I will say a few words written in a sane and sober mind, a very scarce thing with me, for they may, hereafter, save you a great deal of trouble about me, which you do not deserve, and for which I ought to be bastinadoed. I carry all matters to an extreme—so that when I have any little vexation, it grows in five minutes into a theme for Sophocles. Then, and in that temper, if I write to any friend, I have so little self-possession that I give him matter for grieving, at the very time perhaps when I am laughing at a Pun. Your last letter made me blush for the pain I had given you—I know my own disposition so well that I am certain of writing many times hereafter in the same strain to you—now, you know how far to believe in them. You must allow for Imagination. I know I shall not be able to help it.

I am sorry you are grieved at my not continuing my visits to Little Britain.¹ Yet I think I have as far as a Man can do who has Books to read and subjects to think upon—for that reason I have been no where else except to Wentworth Place so nigh at hand—moreover I have been too often in a state of health that made it prudent not to hazard the night air. Yet, further, I will confess to you that I cannot enjoy Society, small or numerous. I am certain that our friends are glad I should come for the mere sake of my coming; but I am certain I bring with me a vexation they are better without. If I can possibly at any time feel my temper coming upon me I refrain even from a promised visit. I am certain I have not a right feeling towards women—at this moment I am striving to be just to them, but I cannot. Is it because they fall so far beneath my boyish Imagination? When I was a schoolboy I thought a fair woman a pure Goddess; my mind was a soft nest in which some one of them slept, though she knew it not. I have no right to expect more than their reality—I thought them ethereal above men—I find them perhaps equal—great by comparison is very small. Insult may be inflicted in more ways than by word or action. One who is tender of being insulted does not like to think an insult against another. I do not like to think insults in a lady's company—I commit a crime with her which absence would not have known. Is it not extraordinary?—when among

¹It was in Little Britain that the Reynolds family lived, Mr. Reynolds, the father of Keats's friend, being thus close to his work as Writing Master at the neighbouring school, Christ's Hospital. Mr. Dilke notes that Bailey was at this time in love with Mariane Reynolds, afterwards Mrs. Green. "She was", he says, "a very beautiful girl—somewhat cold and saturnine, and though always admired not generally liked. She was afterwards hardly tried by misfortune, and never yielded—indeed I never thought so highly of her until she had undergone those trials, which I think were beyond the strength of any other in the family. She was never abased by them—never complained."

men, I have no evil thoughts, no malice, no spleen—I feel free to speak or to be silent—I can listen, and from every one I can learn—my hands are in my pockets, I am free from all suspicion and comfortable. When I am among women, I have evil thoughts, malice, spleen—I cannot speak, or be silent—I am full of suspicions, and therefore listen to nothing—I am in a hurry to be gone. You must be charitable and put all this perversity to my being disappointed since my boyhood. Yet with such feelings I am happier alone among crowds of men, by myself, or with a friend or two. With all this, trust me, I have not the least idea that men of different feelings and inclinations are more short-sighted than myself. I never rejoiced more than at my Brother's marriage, and shall do so at that of any of my friends. I must absolutely get over this—but how? the only way is to find the root of the evil, and so cure it “with backward mutters of dis severing power”¹—that is a difficult thing; for an obstinate Prejudice can seldom be produced but from a gordian complication of feelings, which must take time to unravel, and care to keep unravelled. I could say a good deal about this, but I will leave it, in hopes of better and more worthy dispositions—and also content that I am wronging no one, for after all I do think better of womankind than to suppose they care whether Mister John Keats five feet high likes them or not. You appeared to wish to know my moods on this subject—don't think it a bore my dear fellow, it shall be my Amen. I should not have consented to myself these four months tramping in the highlands, but that I thought it would give me more experience, rub off more prejudice, use [me] to more hardship, identify finer scenes, load me with grander mountains, and strengthen more my reach in Poetry, than would stopping at home among books, even though I should reach Homer. By this time I am comparatively a Mountaineer. I have been among wilds and mountains too much to break out much about their grandeur. I have fed upon oat-cake—not long enough to be very much attached to it.—The first mountains I saw, though not so large as some I have since seen, weighed very solemnly upon me. The effect is wearing away—yet I like them mainly. We have come this evening² with a guide—for without was impossible—into the middle of the Isle of Mull, pursuing our cheap journey to Iona, and perhaps Staffa. We would not follow the common and fashionable mode, from the great Imposition of Expense.

¹ These words are aptly misquoted from Milton's ‘Comus’ (816-19)—

Without his rod revers't,
And backward mutters of dis severing power,
We cannot free the Lady that sits here
In stony fetters fixt, and motionless...

² The 22nd of July 1818.

We have come over heath and rock, and river and bog, to what in England would be called a horrid place. Yet it belongs to a Shepherd pretty well off perhaps. The family speak not a word but Gaelic, and we have not yet seen their faces for the smoke, which, after visiting every cranny (not excepting my eyes very much incommoded for writing), finds its way out at the door. I am more comfortable than I could have imagined in such a place, and so is Brown. The people are all very kind. We lost our way a little yesterday; and inquiring at a Cottage, a young woman without a word threw on her cloak and walked a mile in a mizzling rain and splashy way to put us right again.

I could not have had a greater pleasure in these parts than your mention of my sister. She is very much prisoned from me. I am afraid it will be some time before I can take her to many places I wish. I trust we shall see you ere long in Cumberland—at least I hope I shall, before my visit to America, more than once. I intend to pass a whole year there, if I live to the completion of the three next. My sister's welfare, and the hopes of such a stay in America, will make me observe your advice. I shall be prudent, and more careful of my health than I have been. I hope you will be about paying your first visit to town after settling when we come into Cumberland—Cumberland however will be no distance to me after my present journey. I shall spin to you [in] a Minute. I begin to get rather a contempt of distances. I hope you will have a nice convenient room for a library. Now you are so well in health, do keep it up by never missing your dinner, by not reading hard, and by taking proper exercise. You'll have a horse, I suppose, so you must make a point of sweating him. You say I must study Dante—well, the only books I have with me are those 3 little volumes.¹ I read that fine passage you mention a few days ago. Your letter followed me from Hampstead to Port Patrick, and thence to Glasgow. You must think me, by this time, a very pretty fellow. One of the pleasantest bouts we have had was our walk to Burns's Cottage, over the Doon, and past Kirk Alloway. I had determined to write a sonnet in the Cottage. I did—but lawk! it was so wretched I destroyed it²—however in a few days

¹ 'The Vision; or, Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise, of Dante Alighieri. Translated by the Rev. H. F. Cary, A.M. In three volumes. London: Printed for Taylor and Hessey, 93, Fleet Street. 1814.' This pretty little 32mo. is the first complete edition of Cary's renowned version of the 'Commedia,' though the translation of the 'Inferno' had appeared as far back as 1805. See foot-note, pages 16 and 17, in Volume III of this edition of Keats.

² For the sonnet in question, beginning with the line

This mortal body of a thousand days

see Volume II, page 225. That it survived Keats's attempt to annul it is a piece of good fortune for which we are probably indebted to the watchfulness of that

afterwards I wrote some lines cousin-german to the circumstance, which I will transcribe, or rather cross-scribe in the front of this.

Lines written in the Highlands after a Visit to Burns's Country.

There is a charm in footing slow across a silent plain,
Where patriot Battle has been fought, where glory had the
gain ;

There is a pleasure on the heath where Druids old have been,
Where Mantles grey have rustled by and swept the nettles
green ;

There is a Joy in every spot made known by times of old,
New to the feet, although each tale a hundred times be told ;
There is a deeper Joy than all, more solemn in the heart,
More parching to the tongue than all, of more divine a smart,
When weary steps forget themselves, upon a pleasant turf,
Upon hot sand, or flinty road, or sea-shore iron scurf,
Toward the Castle or the Cot, where long ago was born
One who was great through mortal days, and died of fame
unshorn.

Light heather-bells may tremble then, but they are far away ;
Wood-lark may sing from sandy fern,—the Sun may hear his
Lay ;

Runnels may kiss the grass on shelves and shallows clear,
But their low voices are not heard, though come on travels
drear ;

Blood-red the Sun may set behind black mountain peaks ;
Blue tides may sluice and drench their time in Caves and weedy
creeks ;

Eagles may seem to sleep wing-wide upon the Air ;
Ring-doves may fly convuls'd across to some high-cedar'd lair ;
But the forgotten eye is still fast lidded to the ground,
As Palmer's, that, with weariness, mid-desert shrine hath found.

At such a time the Soul's a child, in childhood is the brain ;
Forgotten is the worldly heart—alone, it beats in vain.—
Aye, if a Madman could have leave to pass a healthful day
To tell his forehead's swoon and faint when first began decay,
He might make tremble many a one whose spirit had gone
forth

To find a Bard's low cradle-place about the silent North.

assiduous Boswell Charles Brown, who was already an eager curator of Keats's utterances in verse. In letter No. LXIV Keats had told Reynolds that the sonnet was so bad he could not transcribe it. In letter No. LXV he had said to Tom Keats on the 13th of July, "it was so bad I cannot venture it here." According to Lord Houghton he had said much the same to Haydon ; but see foot-note at page 136 *ante*. If between the 13th and the 22nd he had torn up the holograph, it is clear that Brown had had ample opportunity to copy it.

Scanty the hour and few the steps beyond the bourn of Care,
Beyond the sweet and bitter world,—beyond it unaware !
Scanty the hour and few the steps, because a longer stay
Would bar return, and make a man forget his mortal way :
O horrible ! to lose the sight of well remember'd face,
Of Brother's eyes, of Sister's brow—constant to every place ;
Filling the Air, as on we move, with Portraiture intense ;
More warm than those heroic tints that pain a Painter's sense,
When shapes of old come striding by, and visages of old,
Locks shining black, hair scanty grey, and passions manifold.
No, No, that horror cannot be, for at the cable's length
Man feels the gentle anchor pull and gladdens in its strength :—
One hour, half-idiot, he stands by mossy waterfall,
But in the very next he reads his soul's Memorial :—
He reads it on the mountain's height, where chance he may sit
down
Upon rough marble diadem—that hill's eternal Crown.
Yet be his Anchor e'er so fast, room is there for a prayer
That man may never lose his Mind on Mountains black and
bare ;
That he may stray league after league some great birthplace to
find
And keep his vision clear from speck, his inward sight unblind.

Reynolds's illness has made him a new man—he will be stronger than ever—before I left London he was really getting a fat face. Brown keeps on writing volumes of adventures to Dilke.¹ When we get in of an evening and I have perhaps taken my rest on a couple of chairs, he affronts my indolence and Luxury by pulling out of his knapsack 1st his paper—2ndly his pens and last his ink. Now I would not care if he would change a little. I say now why not, Bailey, take out his pens first sometimes? But I might as well tell a hen to hold up her head before she drinks instead of afterwards.

Your affectionate Friend
John Keats

¹ Brown's letters, as far as we have them, are graphic and amusing. We might well wish that more of these "volumes of adventures" had been preserved. In the memoir of Keats prefixed to Volume I of the present edition, I drew upon two letters of Brown's, one to the late Henry Snook while at Eton College.—the other to Mr. Dilke of Chichester, the father of Keats's friend. From those letters more extracts will be found further on.

LXVIII.

To THOMAS KEATS.

Well Walk, Hampstead.

Dun an cullen¹

[23 July 1818].

My dear Tom,

Just after my last had gone to the Post, in came one of the Men with whom we endeavoured to agree about going to Staffa—he said what a pity it was we should turn aside and not see the curiosities. So we had a little talk and finally agreed that he should be our guide across the Isle of Mull. We set out, crossed two ferries, one to the Isle of Kerrera of little distance, the other from Kerrera to Mull 9 miles across—we did it in forty minutes with a fine Breeze. The road through the Island, or rather the track, is the most dreary you can think of—between dreary Mountains—over bog and rock and river with our Breeches tucked up and our Stockings in hand. About eight o’Clock we arrived at a shepherd’s Hut into which we could scarcely get for the Smoke through a door lower than my shoulders. We found our way into a little compartment with the rafters and turf thatch blackened with smoke—the earth floor full of Hills and Dales. We had some white Bread with us, made a good supper and slept in our Clothes in some Blankets; our Guide snored on another little bed about an arm’s length off. This morning we came about six Miles to Breakfast by rather a better path and we are now in by comparison a Mansion. Our Guide is I think a very obliging fellow—in the way this morning he sang us two Gaelic songs—one made by a Mrs. Brown on her husband’s being drowned—the other a Jacobin one on Charles Stuart. For some days Brown has been enquiring out his Genealogy here—he thinks his Grandfather came from long Island—he got a parcel of people about him at a cottage door last evening—chatted with one who had been a Miss Brown and who I think from a likeness must have been a Relation—he jawed with the old Woman—flattered a young one—kissed a child who was afraid of his spectacles and finally drank a pint of Milk. They handle his spectacles as we do a sensitive leaf.—

July 26th [1818].²—Well—we had a most wretched walk of 37 Miles across the Island of Mull and then we crossed to Iona or Icolmkill; from Icolmkill we took a boat at a bargain to take

¹ Possibly a mistake of Keats’s for Derrynaculen. The postmark is imperfect. The letter is endorsed by Tom ‘Recd. August 3rd, Angd. Do. Do.’

² An account of Iona and Staffa in terms almost but not quite identical with these was written to George Keats, and, not having been sent at the time, was copied into the great Winchester letter of September 1819, which will be found in the fifth volume of this edition.

us to Staffa and land us at the head of Loch Nakeal¹ whence we should only have to walk half the distance to Oban again and on a better road. All this is well passed and done with this singular piece of Luck that there was an interruption in the bad Weather just as we saw Staffa at which it is impossible to land but in a tolerable calm sea. But I will first mention Icolmkill—I know not whether you have heard much about this island; I never did before I came nigh it. It is rich in the most interesting Antiquities. Who would expect to find the ruins of a fine Cathedral Church, of Cloisters, Colleges, Monasteries and Nunneries is so remote an Island? The beginning of these things was in the sixth Century under the superstition of a would-be Bishop-saint who landed from Ireland and chose the spot from its beauty—for at that time the now treeless place was covered with magnificent Woods. Columba in the Gaelic is Colm signifying Dove—Kill signifies church and I is as good as Island—so I-colm-kill means the Island of Saint Columba's Church. Now this Saint Columba became the Dominic of the barbarian Christians of the north and was famed also far south—but more especially was revered by the Scots, the Picts, the Norwegians, the Irish. In a course of years perhaps the island was considered the most holy ground of the north, and the old Kings of the aforementioned nations chose it for their burial place. We were shown a spot in the Churchyard where they say 61 kings are buried, 48 Scotch, from Fergus 2nd to Mackbeth, 8 Irish, 4 Norwegians and 1 French—they lie in rows compact. Then we were shown other matters of later date but still very ancient—many tombs of Highland Chieftains—their effigies in complete armour face upward black and moss-covered—Abbots and Bishops of the island always of one of the chief Clans. There were plenty Macleans and Macdonnells, among these latter the famous Macdonel Lord of the Isles. There have been 300 Crosses in the island but the Presbyterians destroyed all but two, one of which is a very fine one and completely covered with a shaggy coarse Moss. The old Schoolmaster, an ignorant little man but reckoned very clever, showed us these things. He is a Maclean and as much above 4 foot as he is under 4 foot 3 inches—he stops at one glass of whisky unless you press another and at the second unless you press a third. I am puzzled how to give you an Idea of Staffa. It can only be represented by a first rate drawing. One may compare the surface of the Island to a roof—this roof is supported by grand pillars of basalt standing together as thick as honeycombs. The finest thing is Fingal's Cave—it is entirely a hollowing out of Basalt Pillars. Suppose now the Giants who rebelled against Jove had taken a whole

¹ Keats wrote 'Nakgal.'

Mass of black Columns and bound them together like bunches of matches—and then with immense Axes had made a cavern in the body of these columns—of course the roof and floor must be composed of the broken ends of the Columns—such is Fingal's Cave except that the Sea has done the work of excavations and is continually dashing there—so that we walk along the sides of the cave on the pillars which are left as if for convenient stairs—the roof is arched somewhat gothic-wise and the length of some of the entire side-pillars is 50 feet. About the island you might seat an army of Men each on a pillar. The length of the Cave is 120 feet and from its extremity the view into the sea through the large arch at the entrance—the colour of the columns is a sort of black with a lurking gloom of purple therein. For solemnity and grandeur it far surpasses the finest Cathedral.¹ At the extremity of the Cave there is a small perforation into another cave, at which the waters meeting and buffeting each other there is sometimes produced a report as of a cannon heard as far as Iona which must be twelve miles. As we approached in the boat there was such a fine swell of the sea that the pillars appeared rising immediately out of the crystal—But it is impossible to describe it.

Not Aladin magian
 Ever such a work began.
 Not the Wizard of the Dee
 Ever such a dream could see
 Not St. John in Patmos isle
 In the passion of his toil
 When he saw the churches seven
 Golden aisled built up in heaven
 Gazed at such a rugged wonder.
 As I stood its roofing under
 Lo! I saw one sleeping there
 On the marble cold and bare
 While the surges washed his feet
 And his garments white did beat

¹ Brown writing to Henry Snook (see foot-note, page 147, *ante*), says:—"We hired a boat at Iona to take us to Staffa,—that astonishing island of Basaltic Pillars, which you know I so much desired to look at. We went into the cave, nearly to the end, and I shall never forget the solemn impression it made on me;—the pillars on each side, the waves beneath, and the beautiful roof,—all surpassed the work of man,—it seemed like a Cathedral, built by the Almighty to raise the minds of his creatures to the purest and the grandest devotion,—no one could have an evil thought in such a place. We returned to Oban by a different road, and I ought to tell you of the strange sight we had of a swarm of sea gulls attacking a shoal of herrings, with now and then a porpoise heaving about among them for a supper,—I assure you that as our boat passed the spot, the water was literally spangled with herring scales, so great had been the destruction by these Gulls."

It will be remembered that Brown copied and sent to Severn Keats's beautiful poem on Fingal's Cave—"This Cathedral of the Sea." See Volume II, pages 232-4.

Drench'd about the sombre rocks,
 On his neck his well-grown locks
 Lifted dry above the Main
 Were upon the curl again.
 What is this and what art thou?
 Whisper'd I and touch'd his brow.
 What art thou and what is this?
 Whisper'd I and strove to kiss
 The spirit's hand to wake ~~him up~~ his eyes.
 Up he started in a trice.
 I am Lycidas said he
 Fam'd in funeral Minstrelsy.
 This was architected thus
 By the great Oceanus
 Here his mighty waters play
 Hollow Organs all the day
 Here by turns his dolphins all
 Finny palmers great and small
 Come to pay devotion due—
 Each a mouth of pearls must strew.
~~Many a mortal comes to see~~
~~This Cathedrall of the S~~
 Many a mortal of these days
 Dares to pass our sacred ways
 Dares to touch audaciously
 This Cathedral of the Sea.
 I have been the Pontif priest
 Where the Waters never rest
 Where a fledgy sea bird choir
 Soars for ever—holy fire
 I have hid from Mortal Man.
~~Old~~ Proteus is my Sacristan.
 But the stupid eye of Mortal
 Hath pass'd beyond the Rocky portal
 So for ever will I leave
 Such a taint and soon unweave
 All the magic of the place.
 'Tis now free to stupid face
 To cutters and to fashion boats
 To cravats and to Petticoats.
 The great Sea shall war it down
 For its fame shall not be blown
 At every farthing quadrille dance.
 So saying with a Spirit¹ glance
 He dived—

I am sorry I am so indolent as to write such stuff as this—it

¹ It is possible that the final up-stroke of the *t* is an abortive *s*: there is no apostrophe to support the theory.

can't be help'd.—The western coast of Scotland is a most strange place—it is composed of rocks, Mountains, mountainous and rocky Islands, intersected by Lochs—you can go but a short distance anywhere from salt water in the highlands.

I have a slight sore throat and think it best to stay a day or two at Oban. Then we shall proceed to Fort William and Inverness—where I am anxious to be on account of a letter from you. Brown in his letters puts down every little circumstance. I should like to do the same but I confess myself too indolent and besides next winter every thing will come up in prime order as we verge on such and such things.

Have you heard in any way of George? I should think by this time he must have landed—I in my carelessness never thought of knowing where a letter would find him on the other side—I think Baltimore but I am afraid of directing it to the wrong place. I shall begin some chequer work for him directly and it will be ripe for the post by the time I hear from you next after this. I assure you I often long for a seat and a Cup o' tea at Well Walk—especially now that mountains, castles and Lakes are becoming common to me—yet I would rather summer it out, for on the whole I am happier than when I have time to be glum—perhaps it may cure me. Immediately on my return I shall begin studying hard with a peep at the theatre now and then—and depend upon it I shall be very luxurious. With respect to Women I think I shall be able to conquer my passions hereafter better than I have yet done. You will help me to talk of George next winter and we will go now and then to see Fanny.—Let me hear a good account of your health and comfort telling me truly how you do alone.—

Remember me to all including Mr. and Mrs. Bentley.¹

Your most affectionate brother

John

LXIX.

To THOMAS KEATS.

Well Walk, Hampstead

Letter Findlay, August 3rd

[Postmark, Inverness, 6 August 1818].

My dear Tom,

Ah mio Ben.

We have made but poor progress lately, chiefly from bad weather, for my throat is in a fair way of getting quite well, so I

¹ Mrs. Bentley, the Postman's wife who looked after the Keatses, is described by Dilke as "a well-behaved kind and motherly person." It was doubtless this fact and the proximity of friends that made it possible for Keats to leave his young brother alone at the lodgings and start on the Scotch tour.

LXIX. If Keats's date is right, the interval between the beginning of this letter and its consignment to the Post Office was three days; in the meantime the sore

have nothing of consequence to tell you till yesterday when we went up Ben Nevis, the highest Mountain in Great Britain. On that account I will never ascend another in this empire—Skiddaw is nothing to it either in height or in difficulty. It is above 4,300 feet from the Sea level, and Fortwilliam stands at the head of a Salt water Lake, consequently we took it completely from that level. I am heartily glad it is done—it is almost like a fly crawling up a wainscoat. Imagine the task of mounting ten Saint Pauls without the convenience of Staircases. We set out about five in the morning with a Guide in the Tartan and Cap, and soon arrived at the foot of the first ascent which we immediately began upon—after much fag and tug and a rest and a glass of whiskey apiece we gained the top of the first rise and saw then a tremendous chap above us, which the guide said was still far from the top. After the first Rise our way lay along a heath valley in which there was a Loch—after about a Mile in this Valley we began upon the next ascent, more formidable by far than the last, and kept mounting with short intervals of rest until we got above all vegetation, among nothing but loose Stones which lasted us to the very top—the Guide said we had three Miles of a stony ascent—we gained the first tolerable level after the valley to the height of what in the Valley we had thought the top and saw still above us another huge crag which still the Guide said was not the top—to that we made with an obstinate fag, and having gained it there came on a Mist, so that from that part to the very top we walked in a Mist. The whole immense head of the Mountain is composed of large loose stones—thousands of acres. Before we had got halfway up we passed large patches of snow and near the top there is a chasm some hundred feet deep completely glutted with it.—Talking of chasms they are the finest wonder of the whole—they appear great rents in the very heart of the mountain though they are not, being at the side of it, but other huge crags arising round it give the appearance to Nevis of a shattered heart or Core in itself. These Chasms are 1500 feet in depth and are the most tremendous places I have ever seen—they turn one giddy if you choose to give way to it. We tumbled in large stones and set the echoes at work in fine style. Sometimes these chasms are tolerably clear, sometimes there is a misty cloud which seems to steam up and sometimes they are entirely smothered with clouds.

After a little time the Mist cleared away but still there were large Clouds about attracted by old Ben to a certain distance so

throat appears to have held its own even by Keats's own admission at the close; and a day later Brown wrote very seriously of it, both to Mr. Dilke of Chichester and to Henry Snook. Letterfinlay is about twelve miles (as the crow flies) from Ben Nevis, in the direct line for Inverness, and is close to the banks of Loch Lochy.

as to form as it appeared large dome curtains which kept sailing about, opening and shutting at intervals here and there and everywhere : so that although we did not see one vast wide extent of prospect all round we saw something perhaps finer—these cloudveils opening with a dissolving motion and showing us the mountainous region beneath as through a loophole—these cloudy loopholes ever varying and discovering fresh prospect east, west, north and south. Then it was misty again, and again it was fair—then puff came a cold breeze of wind and bared a craggy chap we had not yet seen though in close neighbourhood. Every now and then we had overhead blue Sky clear and the sun pretty warm. I do not know whether I can give you an Idea of the prospect from a large Mountain top. You are on a stony plain which of course makes you forget you are on any but low ground—the horizon or rather edges of this plain being above 4000 feet above the Sea hide all the Country immediately beneath you, so that the next object you see all round next to the edges of the flat top are the Summits of Mountains of some distance off. As you move about on all sides you see more or less of the near neighbour country according as the Mountain you stand upon is in different parts steep or rounded—but the most new thing of all is the sudden leap of the eye from the extremity of what appears a plain into so vast a distance. On one part of the top there is a handsome pile of Stones done pointedly by some soldiers of artillery : I climbed onto them and so got a little higher than old Ben himself. It was not so cold as I expected—yet cold enough for a glass of Whiskey now and then. There is not a more fickle thing than the top of a Mountain—what would a Lady give to change her head-dress as often and with as little trouble!—There are a good many red deer upon Ben Nevis—we did not see one—the dog we had with us kept a very sharp look out and really languished for a bit of a worry. I have said nothing yet of our getting on among the loose stones large and small sometimes on two, sometimes on three, sometimes four legs—sometimes two and stick, sometimes three and stick, then four again, then two, then a jump, so that we kept on ringing changes on foot, hand, stick, jump, boggle, stumble, foot, hand, foot (very gingerly), stick again, and then again a game at all fours. After all there was one Mrs. Cameron of 50 years of age and the fattest woman in all Invernessshire who got up this Mountain some few years ago—true she had her servants—but then she had herself. She ought to have hired Sisyphus—“Up the high hill he heaves a huge round—Mrs. Cameron.” ’Tis said a little conversation took place between the mountain and the Lady. After taking a glass of Whiskey as she was tolerably seated at ease she thus began—

MRS. C.

Upon my Life Sir Nevis I am pique'd
 That I have so far panted tugg'd and reek'd
 To do an honour to your old bald pate
 And now am sitting on you just to bate,
 Without your paying me one compliment.
 Alas 'tis so with all, when our intent
 Is plain, and in the eye of all Mankind
 We fair ones show a preference, too blind !
 You Gentle man immediately turn tail—
 O let me then my hapless fate bewail !
 Ungrateful Baldpate have I not disdain'd
 The pleasant Valleys—have I not madbrain'd
 Deserted all my Pickles and preserves
 My China closet too—with wretched Nerves
 To boot—say wretched ingrate have I not
 Le[f]t my soft cushion chair and caudle pot.
 'Tis true I had no corns—no ! thank the fates
 My Shoemaker was always Mr. Bates.
 And if not Mr. Bates why I'm not old !
 Still dumb ungrateful Nevis—still so cold !

Here the Lady took some more whiskey and was putting even more to her lips when she dashed [it] to the Ground for the Mountain began to grumble—which continued for a few minutes before he thus began.

BEN NEVIS.

What whining bit of tongue and Mouth thus dares
 Disturb my slumber of a thousand years ?
 Even so long my sleep has been secure—
 And to be so awaked I'll not endure.
 Oh pain—for since the Eagle's earliest scream
 I've had a damn'd, confounded ugly dream,
 A Nightmare sure. What Madam was it you ?
 It cannot be ! My old eyes are not true !
 Red-Crag,¹ my Spectacles ! Now let me see !
 Good Heavens Lady how the gemini
 Did you get here ! O I shall split my sides !
 I shall earthquake——

MRS. C.

Sweet Nevis do not quake, for though I love
 Your honest Countenance all things above
 Truly I should not like to be convey'd

¹A domestic of Ben's.

So far into your Bosom—gentle Maid
Loves not too rough a treatment gentle Sir—
Pray thee be calm and do not quake nor stir
No not a Stone or I shall go in fits—

BEN NEVIS.

I must—I shall—I meet not such tit bits—
I meet not such sweet creatures every day—
By my old night cap night cap night and day
I must have one sweet Buss—I must and shall!
Red Crag !—What Madam can you then repent
Of all the toil and vigour you have spent
To see Ben Nevis and to touch his nose?
Red Crag I say ! O I must have them close !
Red Crag, there lies beneath my farthest toe
A vein of Sulphur—go dear Red Crag, go—
And rub your flinty back against it—budge !
Dear Madam I must kiss you, faith I must !
I must Embrace you with my dearest gust !
Block-head,¹ d'ye hear—Block-head I'll make her feel
There lies beneath my east leg's northern heel
A cave of young earth dragons—well my boy
Go thither quick and so complete my joy
Take you a bundle of the largest pines
And when the sun on fiercest Phosphor shines
Fire them and ram them in the Dragon's nest
Then will the dragons fry and fizz their best
Until ten thousand now no bigger than
Poor Alligators—poor things of one span—
Will each one swell to twice ten times the size
Of northern whale—then for the tender prize—
The moment then—for then will Red Crag rub
His flinty back—and I shall kiss and snub
And press my dainty morsel to my breast.
Block-head make haste !

O Muses weep the rest—

The Lady fainted and he thought her dead
So pulled the clouds again about his head
And went to sleep again—soon she was rous'd
By her affrighted servants—next day hous'd
Safe on the lowly ground she bless'd her fate
That fainting fit was not delayed too late.

But what surprises me above all is how this Lady got down again. I felt it horribly. 'Twas the most vile descent—shook me all to pieces. Over leaf you will find a Sonnet I wrote on

¹ Another domestic of Ben's.

the top of Ben Nevis. We have just entered Inverness. I have three Letters from you and one [from] Fanny—and one from Dilke. I would set about crossing this all over for you but I will first write to Fanny and Mrs. Wylie.¹ Then I will begin another to you and not before because I think it better you should have this as soon as possible. My Sore throat is not quite well and I intend stopping here a few days.

Read me a lesson, Muse, and speak it loud

Upon the top of Nevis, blind in mist!

I look into the chasms, and a shroud

Vaprous doth hide them,—just so much I wist

Mankind do know of hell; I look o'erhead,

And there is sullen mist,—even so much

Mankind can tell of heaven; mist is spread

Before the earth, beneath me,—even such,

Even so vague is man's sight of himself!

Here are the craggy stones beneath my feet,—

Thus much I know that, a poor witless elf,

I tread on them,—that all my eye doth meet

Is mist and crag, not only on this height,

But in the world of thought and mental might!

Good bye till to-morrow.

Your most affectionate Brother

John —

LXX.

To MRS. WYLIE.

Inverness,

6 August [1818].

My dear Madam,

It was a great regret to me that I should leave all my friends, just at the moment when I might have helped to soften

¹ Misspelt 'Wilie' in the original.

LXX. This letter to George Keats's mother-in-law, being the latest extant letter written in Scotland, affords a fitting occasion for the insertion of the main portion of Brown's letter to Mr. Dilke of Chichester. The few lines omitted will be found in the extract from this letter given in the memoir prefixed to Volume I (page xxxvi).

Inverness, 7th August 1818.

"My dear Sir,

What shall I write about? I am resolved to send you a letter; but where is the subject? I have already stumped away on my ten toes 642 miles, and seen many fine sights, but I am puzzled to know what to make choice of. Suppose I begin with myself,—there must be a pleasure in that,—and, by way of variety, I must bring in Mr. Keats. Then, be it known, in the first place, we are in as continued a bustle as an old dowager at home—always moving—moving

away the time for them. I wanted not to leave my brother Tom, but more especially, believe me, I should like to have remained near you, were it but for an atom of consolation after parting with so dear a daughter. My brother George has ever been more than a brother to me; he has been my greatest friend, and I can never forget the sacrifice you have made for his happiness. As I walk along the Mountains here I am full of these things, and lay in wait, as it were, for the pleasure of seeing you immediately on my return to town. I wish, above all things, to say a word of Comfort to you, but I know not how. It is impossible to prove that black is white; it is impossible to make out that sorrow is joy, or joy is sorrow.

Tom tells me that you called on Mrs. Haslam, with a newspaper giving an account of a gentleman in a Fur cap, falling over a precipice in Kirkcudbrightshire. If it was me, I did it in a dream, or in some magic interval between the first and second cup of tea; which is nothing extraordinary when we hear that Mahomet, in getting out of Bed, upset a jug of water, and, whilst it was falling, took a fortnight's trip, as it seemed,

from one place to another, like Dante's inhabitants of the Sulphur Kingdom in search of cold ground—prosing over the map—calculating distances—packing up knapsacks, and paying bills. There's so much for yourself, my dear. 'Thank ye, sir.' How many miles to the next town? 'Seventeen lucky miles, sir.' That must be at least twenty; come along, Keats; here's your stick; why, we forgot the map! now for it; seventeen lucky miles! I must have another hole taken up in the strap of my knapsack. Oh, the misery of coming to the meeting of three roads without a finger post! There's an old woman coming,—God bless her! she'll tell us all about it. Eh! she can't speak English! Repeat the name of the town over in all ways, but the true spelling way, and possibly she may understand. No, we have not got the brogue. Then toss up heads or tails, for right and left, and fortune send us the right road! Here's a soaking shower coming! ecod! it rolls between the mountains as if it would drown us. At last we come, wet and weary, to the long-wished-for inn. What have you for dinner? 'Truly nothing.' No eggs? 'We have two.' Any loaf-bread? 'No, sir, but we've nice oat-cakes.' Any bacon? any dried fish? 'No, no, no, sir!' But you've plenty of whiskey? 'O yes, sir, plenty of whiskey!' This is melancholy. Why should so beautiful a country be poor? Why can't craggy mountains, and granite rocks, bear corn, wine, and oil? These are our misfortunes,—these are what make me 'an eagle's talon in the waist.' But I am well repaid for my sufferings. We came out to endure, and to be gratified with scenery, and lo! we have not been disappointed either way. As for the oat-cakes, I was once in despair about them. I was not only too dainty, but they absolutely made me sick. With a little gulping, I can manage them now. Mr. Keats, however, is too unwell for fatigue and privation. I am waiting here to see him off in the smack for London.

He caught a violent cold in the Island of Mull, which, far from leaving him, has become worse, and the physician here thinks him too thin and fevered to proceed on our journey. It is a cruel disappointment. . . . Poor Charles Brown will have to trudge by himself,—an odd fellow, and moreover an odd figure; imagine me with a thick stick in my hand, the knapsack on my back, 'with spectacles on nose,' a white hat, a tartan coat and trousers, and a Highland plaid thrown over my shoulders! Don't laugh at me, there's a good fellow, although Mr. Keats calls me the Red Cross Knight, and declares my own shadow is ready to split its sides

to Heaven; yet was back in time to save one drop of water being spilt. As for Fur caps, I do not remember one beside my own, except at Carlisle: this was a very good Fur cap I met in High Street, and I dare say was the unfortunate one. I dare say that the Fates, seeing but two Fur caps in the north, thought it too extraordinary, and so threw the dies which of them should be drowned. The lot fell upon Jones: I dare say his name was Jones. All I hope is that the gaunt Ladies said not a word about hanging; if they did I shall repent¹ that I was not half-drowned in Kirkcudbright. Stop! let me see!—being half-drowned by falling from a precipice, is a very romantic affair: why should I not take it to myself? How glorious to be introduced in a drawing-room to a Lady who reads Novels, with “Mr. So-and-so—Miss So-and-so; Miss So-and-so, this is Mr.

as it follows me. This dress is...light and not easily penetrated by the wet, and when it is, it is not cold...

I must not think of the wind, and the sun, and the rain, after our journey through the Island of Mull. There's a wild place! Thirty-seven miles of jumping and flinging over great stones along no path at all, up the steep and down the steep, and wading through rivulets up to the knees, and crossing a bog, a mile long, up to the ankles. I should like to give you a whole and particular account of the many, many wonderful places we have visited; but why should I ask a man to pay vigentiple postage? In one word then,—that is to the end of the letter,—let me tell you we have seen one-half of the lakes in Westmoreland and Cumberland,—we have travelled over the whole of the coast of Kirkcudbrightshire, and skudded over to Donaghadee. But we did not like Ireland,—at least that part—and would go no farther than Belfast. So back came we in a whirligig,—that is, in a hurry—and trotted up to Ayr, where we had the happiness of drinking whiskey in the very house that Burns was born in, and saw the banks of bonny Doon, and the brigs of Ayr, and Kirk Alloway,—we saw it all! After this we went to Glasgow, and then to Loch Lomond; but you can read all about that place in one of the fashionable guide-books. Then to Loch Awe, and down to the foot of it,—oh, what a glen we went through to get at it! At the top of the glen my Itinerary mentioned a place called ‘Rest and be thankful,’ nine miles off; now we had set out without breakfast, intending to take our meal there, when, horror and starvation! ‘Rest and be thankful’ was not an inn, but a stone seat!”

The foregoing account is extracted from ‘Papers of a Critic’ (Volume I, pages 3-5). In the same volume (page 5) there are two notes of Mrs. Dilke's connected with the termination of Keats's Scotch tour: under date the 16th of August 1818 she writes—“John Keats' brother is extremely ill, and the doctor begged that his brother might be sent for. Dilke accordingly wrote off to him, which was a very unpleasant task. However, from the journal received from Brown last Friday, he says Keats has been so long ill with his sore throat, that he is obliged to give up. I am rather glad of it, as he will not receive the letter, which might have frightened him very much, as he is extremely fond of his brother. How poor Brown will get on alone I know not, as he loses a cheerful, good-tempered, clever companion.” And again, on the 19th of August, Mrs. Dilke writes—“John Keats arrived here last night, as brown and as shabby as you can imagine; scarcely any shoes left, his jacket all torn at the back, a fur cap, a great plaid, and his knapsack. I cannot tell what he looked like.”

¹ Lord Houghton reads ‘repeat’ for ‘repent’.

So-and-so, who fell off a precipice and was half-drowned." Now I refer to you, whether I should lose so fine an opportunity of making my fortune. No romance lady could resist me—none. Being run under a Wagon—side-lamed in a play-house, Apoplectic through Brandy—and a thousand other tolerably decent things for badness, would be nothing, but being tumbled over a precipice into the sea—oh! it would make my fortune—especially if you could contrive¹ to hint, from this bulletin's authority, that I was not upset on my own account, but that I dashed into the waves after Jessy of Dumb-lane, and pulled her out by the hair;—but that, alas! she was dead, or she would have made me happy with her hand—however in this you may use your own discretion. But I must leave joking, and seriously aver, that I have been *werry* romantic indeed among these Mountains and Lakes. I have got wet through, day after day—eaten oat-cake, and drank Whisky—walked up to my knees in Bog—got a sore throat—gone to see Icolmkill and Staffa; met with wholesome food just here and there as it happened—went up Ben Nevis, and—N.B., came down again. Sometimes when I am rather tired I lean rather languishingly on a rock, and long for some famous Beauty to get down from her Palfrey in passing, approach me, with—her saddle-bags, and give me—a dozen or two capital roast-beef Sandwiches.

When I come into a large town, you know there is no putting one's Knapsack into one's fob, so the people stare. We have been taken for Spectacle-vendors, Razor-sellers, Jewellers, travelling linen-draper, Spies, Excisemen, and many things I have no idea of. When I asked for letters at Port Patrick, the man asked what regiment? I have had a peep also at Little Ireland. Tell Henry I have not camped quite on the bare Earth yet, but nearly as bad, in walking through Mull, for the Shepherd's huts you can scarcely breathe in, for the Smoke which they seem to endeavour to preserve for smoking on a large scale. Besides riding about 400, we have walked above 600 Miles, and may therefore reckon ourselves as set out.

I assure you, my dear Madam, that one of the greatest pleasures I shall have on my return, will be seeing you, and that I shall ever be

Yours, with the greatest respect and sincerity,
John Keats.

¹In Lord Houghton's editions the word here is 'continue'; but 'contrive' is clearly right.

LXXI.

To FANNY KEATS.

Miss Tucker's, Walthamstow.

Hampstead, August 18th [1818].

My dear Fanny,

I am afraid you will [think?] me very negligent in not having answered your Letter—I see it is dated June 12. I did not arrive at Inverness till the 8th¹ of this Month so I am very much concerned at your being disappointed so long a time. I did not intend to have returned to London so soon but have a bad sore throat from a cold I caught in the island of Mull: therefore I thought it best to get home as soon as possible, and went on board the Smack from Cromarty. We had a nine days passage and were landed at London Bridge yesterday. I shall have a good deal to tell you about Scotland—I would begin here but I have a confounded tooth ache. Tom has not been getting better since I left London and for the last fortnight has been worse than ever—he has been getting a little better for these two or three days. I shall ask Mr. Abbey to let me bring you to Hampstead. If Mr. A. should see this Letter tell him that he still must if he pleases forward the Post Bill to Perth as I have empowered my fellow traveller to receive it. I have a few Scotch pebbles for you from the Island of Icolmkill—I am afraid they are rather shabby—I did not go near the Mountain of Cairn Gorm. I do not know the Name of George's ship—the Name of the Port he has gone to is Philadelphia whence he will travel to the Settlement across the Country—I will tell you all about this when I see you. The Title of my last Book is 'Endymion'—you shall have one soon. I would not advise you to play on the Flageolet—however I will get you one if you please. I will speak to Mr. Abbey on what you say concerning school. I am sorry for your poor Canary. You shall have another volume of my first Book. My tooth ache keeps on so that I cannot write with any pleasure—all I can say now is that your² Letter is a very nice one without fault and that you will hear from or see in a few days if his throat will let him,

Your affectionate Brother

John.

¹This is a mistake—see the previous letter, written from Inverness to Mrs. Wylie.

²In the original 'you' is written inadvertently for 'your'.

LXXII.

To FANNY KEATS.

Miss Tucker's, Walthamstow.

Hampstead, Tuesday

[Postmark, 25 August 1818.]

My dear Fanny,

I have just written to Mr. Abbey to ask him to let you come and see poor Tom who has lately been much worse. He is better at present—sends his Love to you and wishes much to see you—I hope he will shortly—I have not been able to come to Walthamstow on his account as well as a little Indisposition of my own. I have asked Mr A. to write me—if he does not mention any thing of it to you, I will tell you what reasons he has though I do not think he will make any objection. Write me what you want¹ with a Flageolet and I will get one ready for you by the time you come.

Your affectionate Brother

John —

LXXIII.

To JANE REYNOLDS.

Well Walk, Sept. 1st [1818].

My dear Jane,

Certainly your kind note would rather refresh than trouble me, and so much the more would your coming if as you say, it could be done without agitating my Brother too much. Receive on your Hearth our deepest thanks for your Solicitude concerning us.

I am glad John is not hurt, but gone safe² into Devonshire—I shall be in great expectation of his Letter—but the promise of it in so anxious and friendly a way I prize more than a hundred. I shall be in town to-day on some business with my guardian 'as was'³ with scarce a hope of being able to call on you. For

LXXII. Although the post-mark of the original letter is not distinct, there can be no real doubt about the date of this letter. The year and month are clearly stamped; the letter was certainly not written the same day as the previous one; the previous one was written on the 18th of August, which was a Tuesday; on Tuesday the 11th and Tuesday the 4th Keats was in Scotland; and Tuesday the 25th is the only one remaining. On that day, therefore, the brothers were certainly at Hampstead together.

¹ In the original the word 'what' is inadvertently repeated in place of 'want.'

² The word in the original might possibly be 'sane'; but it is more probably 'save,' written in mistake for 'safe.'

³ Mr. Abbey, who is mentioned in the two previous letters.

these two last days Tom has been more cheerful: you shall hear again soon how he will be.

Remember us particularly to your Mother.

Your sincere friend

John Keats—

LXXIV.

To CHARLES WENTWORTH DILKE.

at Mr. Snook's, Bedhampton, near Havant, Hants.

[*Postmark, Hampstead, 21 September 1818.*]

My dear Dilke,

According to the Wentworth place Bulletin you have left Brighton much improved: therefore now a few lines will be more of a pleasure than a bore. I have things to say to you, and would fain begin upon them in this fourth line: but I have a Mind too well regulated to proceed upon any thing without due preliminary remarks.—You may perhaps have observed that in the simple process of eating radishes I never begin at the root but constantly dip the little green head in the salt—that in the Game of Whist if I have an ace I constantly play it first. So how can I with any face begin without a dissertation on letter-writing? Yet when I consider that a sheet of paper contains room only for three pages and a half, how can I do justice to such a pregnant subject? However, as you have seen the history of the world stamped as it were by a diminishing glass in the form of a chronological Map, so will I “with retractile claws” draw this into the form of a table—whereby it will occupy merely the remainder of this first page—

Folio—Parsons, Lawyers, Statesmen, Physicians out of place
—ut—Eustace—Thornton—out of practice or on their travels.

Foolscap—1. Superfine—Rich or noble poets—ut Byron. 2. common ut egomet.

Quarto—Projectors, Patentees, Presidents, Potato growers.

Bath—Boarding schools, and suburbans in general.

Gilt edge—Dandies in general, male, female and literary.

Octavo or tears—All who make use of a lascivious seal.

Duodec.—May be found for the most part on Milliners' and Dressmakers' Parlour tables.

Strip—At the Playhouse-doors, or any where.

Slip—Being but a variation.

Snip—So called from its size being disguised by a twist.

I suppose you will have heard that Hazlitt has on foot a prosecution against Blackwood.¹ I dined with him a few days

¹The August number of ‘Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine’ (Number XVII), which contained the infamous attack upon Keats, bristled also with the most

since at Hessey's—there was not a word said about it, though I understand he is excessively vexed. Reynolds, by what I hear,

scurrilous of its habitual scurrilities, directed against William Hazlitt. Besides a blatant and vulgar article entitled 'Hazlitt Cross-questioned,' full of insolent personal abuse, there was a paper on Shakespeare's Sonnets, bringing in Hazlitt for another dose of the like nauseous stuff. It is curious that we find so little trace in Keats's letters of the kind of impression made upon him by the attack on himself and his poetry in the paper Number IV of 'The Cockney School of Poets.' At pages 41-3 of the present volume will be found a portion of a letter written to Bailey in the course of October 1817, when Number I of the series had just appeared, from the tone of which we should have anticipated less of dignified silence on the appearance of Number IV. In the mean time Numbers II and III, still concerning Leigh Hunt, had appeared in the magazine for November 1817 and July 1818. Leigh Hunt had addressed the anonymous author twice in 'The Examiner' (on the 2nd of November 1817 very briefly, and at greater length on the 16th of the same month), and in 'Blackwood's Magazine' for January 1818 the anonymuncle had replied with more scurrility, adding to his previous lies the false denial that any of his statements had regarded Hunt's personal character. And now came the fourth instalment, headed with the following extract:

—OF KEATS,
THE MUSES' SON OF PROMISE, AND WHAT FEATS
HE YET MAY DO, &c.

CORNELIUS WEBB.

The subject is opened thus:—

"Of all the manias of this mad age, the most incurable, as well as the most common, seems to be no other than the *Metromanic*. The just celebrity of Robert Burns and Miss Baillie has had the melancholy effect of turning the heads of we know not how many farm-servants and unmarried ladies... To witness the disease of any human understanding, however feeble, is distressing; but the spectacle of an able mind reduced to a state of insanity is of course ten times more afflicting." To show how this position is applied to the theme, I give the following string of extracts from the more salient vulgarities of the paper:—"It is with such sorrow as this that we have contemplated the case of Mr John Keats. This young man appears to have received from nature talents... which, devoted to the purpose of any useful profession, must have rendered him a respectable, if not an eminent citizen. His friends, we understand, destined him to the career of medicine, and he was bound apprentice some years ago to a worthy apothecary in town. But all has been undone by a sudden attack of the malady to which we have alluded. Whether Mr John had been sent home with a diuretic or composing draught to some patient far gone in the poetical mania, we have not heard. This much is certain, that he has caught the infection, and that thoroughly... Time, firm treatment, and rational restraint, do much for many apparently hopeless invalids; and if Mr Keats should happen, at some interval of reason, to cast his eye upon our pages, he may perhaps be convinced of the existence of his malady... The readers of the Examiner newspaper were informed, some time ago, by a solemn paragraph, in Mr Hunt's best style, of the appearance of two new stars of glorious magnitude and splendour in the poetical horizon of the land of Cockaigne. One of these turned out, by and by, to be no other than Mr John Keats. This precocious adulation confirmed the wavering apprentice in his desire to quit the gallipots, and at the same time excited in his too susceptible mind a fatal admiration for the character and talents of the most worthless and affected of all the versifiers of our time... Mr Keats classes together WORDSWORTH, HUNT and HAYDON, as the three greatest spirits of the age, and... alludes to himself, and some others of the rising brood of Cockneys, as likely to attain hereafter an equally honourable elevation... The nations are to listen and be dumb! and why, good

is almost over-happy,¹ and Rice is in town. I have not seen him, nor shall I for some time, as my throat has become worse after getting well, and I am determined to stop at home till I am quite well. I was going to Town to-morrow with Mrs. D. but I thought it best to ask her excuse this morning. I wish I could say Tom was any better. His identity presses upon me so all day that I am obliged to go out—and although I intended to have given some time to study alone, I am obliged to write and plunge into abstract images to ease myself of his countenance, his voice, and feebleness—so that I live now in a continual fever. It must be poisonous to life, although I feel well. Imagine “the hateful siege of contraries”²—if I think of fame, of poetry, it seems a crime to me, and yet I must do so or suffer.

Johnny Keats? because Leigh Hunt is editor of the Examiner, and Haydon has painted the Judgment of Solomon, and you and Cornelius Webb, and a few more city sparks, are pleased to look upon yourselves as so many future Shakespeares and Miltons!...After blaspheming himself into a fury against Boileau &c. Mr Keats comforts himself and his readers with a view of the present more promising aspect of affairs; above all with the ripened glories of the poet of Rimini...From some verses addressed to various amiable individuals of the other sex, it appears, notwithstanding all this gossamer-work, that Johnny's affections are not entirely confined to objects purely ethereal. Take, by way of specimen, the following prurient and vulgar lines, evidently meant for some young lady east of Temple-bar.

Add too, the sweetness
Of thy honied voice; the neatness
Of thine ankle lightly turn'd: &c...

His Endymion is not a Greek shepherd, loved by a Grecian goddess; he is merely a young Cockney rhymester, dreaming a phantastic dream at the full of the moon...Mr Hunt is a small poet, but he is a clever man. Mr Keats is a still smaller poet, and he is only a boy of pretty abilities, which he has done every thing in his power to spoil...And so, like many other romances, terminates the ‘Poetic Romance’ of Johnny Keats, in a patched-up wedding. We had almost forgot to mention, that Keats belongs to the Cockney School of Politics, as well as the Cockney School of Poetry. It is fit that he who holds Rimini to be the first poem, should believe the Examiner to be the first politician of the day. We admire consistency, even in folly...And now, good-morrow to ‘the Muses’ son of Promise;’ as for ‘the feats he yet may do,’ as we do not pretend to say, like himself, ‘Muse of my native land am I inspired,’ we shall adhere to the safe old rule of *parca verba*. We venture to make one small prophecy, that his bookseller will not a second time venture £50 upon any thing he can write. It is a better and a wiser thing to be a starved apothecary than a starved poet; so back to the shop, Mr John, back to ‘plasters, pills, and ointment boxes,’ &c. But, for Heaven's sake, young Sangrado, be a little more sparing of extenuatives and soporifics in your practice than you have been in your poetry.”

¹ Presumably concerning his marriage.

² See ‘Paradise Lost, Book IX, lines 118-22.

But I in none of these
Find place or refuge; and the more I see
Pleasures about me, so much more I feel
Torment within me, as from the hateful siege
Of contraries;...

I am sorry to give you pain—I am almost resolved to burn this—but I really have not self-possession and magnanimity enough to manage the thing otherwise—after all it may be a nervousness proceeding from the Mercury.

Bailey I hear is gaining his spirits, and he will yet be what I once thought impossible, a cheerful Man—I think he is not quite so much spoken of in Little Britain. I forgot to ask Mrs. Dilke if she had any thing she wanted to say immediately to you. This morning look'd so unpromising that I did not think she would have gone—but I find she has, on sending for some volumes of Gibbon. I was in a little funk yesterday, for I sent in an unseal'd note of sham abuse, until I recollected, from what I heard Charles say, that the servant could neither read nor write—not even to her Mother as Charles observed. I have just had a Letter from Reynolds—he is going on gloriously. The following is a translation of a line of Ronsard—

Love poured her beauty into my warm veins.¹

You have passed your Romance, and I never gave in to it, or else I think this line a feast for one of your Lovers. How goes it with Brown?

Your sincere friend

John Keats—

LXXV.

TO JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS.

[Hampstead, 21 or 22 September 1818.]

My dear Reynolds,

Believe me I have rather rejoiced at your happiness than fretted at your silence. Indeed I am grieved on your account that I am not at the same time happy. But I conjure you to think at present of nothing but pleasure—"Gather the rose, &c."²—gorge the honey of life. I pity you as much that it cannot last for ever, as I do myself now drinking bitters. Give yourself up to it—you cannot help it—and I have a consolation in thinking so. I never was in love—yet the voice and shape of

¹ See the next letter,—to Reynolds.

² It is pretty clear that this is not an abortive invocation of the aid of Herrick ("Gather ye rosebuds while ye may") to express what Keats wanted to say to Reynolds, but a draft on one of the other debtors to Ausonius for the thought preserved in the line

Collige, virgo, rosas dum flos novus et nova pubes.

"Gather the rose &c." looks indeed like the beginning of a translation from Tasso's
Cogliam la rosa d'amorè;

and when Keats wrote in his Burton opposite Ausonius's verse (See Volume III, page 272) those words of Tasso with 'ubique' added and underlined, he probably meant to exclaim, "Why, *cogliam la rosa d'amorè* is everywhere!"

a Woman¹ has haunted me these two days—at such a time, when the relief, the feverous relief of Poetry seems a much less crime. This morning Poetry has conquered—I have relapsed into those abstractions which are my only life—I feel escaped from a new strange and threatening sorrow—and I am thankful for it.² There is an awful warmth about my heart like a load of Immortality.

Poor Tom—that woman—and Poetry were ringing changes in my senses. Now I am in comparison happy—I am sensible this will distress you—you must forgive me. Had I known you would have set out so soon I could have sent you the “Pot of Basil” for I had copied it out ready. Here is a free translation of a Sonnet of Ronsard, which I think will please you—I have the loan of his works—they have great Beauties.

Nature withheld Cassandra in the skies,
 For more adornment, a full thousand years ;
 She took their cream of Beauty's fairest dyes,
 And shap'd and tinted her above all Peers :
 Meanwhile Love kept her dearly with his wings,
 And underneath their shadow fill'd her eyes
 With such a richness that the cloudy Kings
 Of high Olympus utter'd slavish sighs.
 When from the Heavens I saw her first descend,
 My heart took fire, and only burning pains,
 They were my pleasures—they my Life's sad end ;
 Love pour'd her beauty into my warm veins...

I had not the original by me when I wrote it, and did not recollect the purport of the last lines.³

I should have seen Rice ere this—but I am confined by Sawrey's mandate in the house now, and have as yet only gone out in fear of the damp night.—You know what an undangerous

¹ The lady here referred to was Miss Jane Cox, a cousin of the Reynoldses. Not being pleased with Reynolds's sisters in this connexion, as will be seen from Letter LXXXI, Keats's natural delicacy would prevent his saying who the woman was.

² It must have been very soon after this that Keats met Fanny Brawne ; for, in the annotated copy of the ‘Life, Letters’ &c. frequently referred to, Mr. Dilke records that about October or November 1818 Keats “met Miss Brawne for the first time at my house. Brown let his house when he and Keats went to Scotland to Mrs. Brawne, a stranger to all of us. As the house adjoined mine in a large garden, we almost necessarily became acquainted. When Brown returned, the Brawnes took another house at the top of Downshire Hill ; but we kept up our acquaintance and no doubt Keats, who was daily with me, met her soon after his return from Teignmouth.” For ‘Teignmouth’ we should read ‘Scotland’ : the mistake was Lord Houghton's in misplacing a letter to Bailey so as to make it seem that Keats went to Teignmouth again on returning from the north.

³ Although Woodhouse thought he had the final couplet, it has not come down to us.

matter it is. I shall soon be quite recovered. Your offer I shall remember as though it had even now taken place in fact.—I think it cannot be. Tom is not up yet—I cannot say he is better. I have not heard from George.

Your affectionate friend
John Keats.

LXXVI.

To FANNY KEATS.

Miss Tuckey's, Walthamstow.

[Postmark, Hampstead, 9 October 1818.]

My dear Fanny,

Poor Tom is about the same as when you saw him last; perhaps weaker—were it not for that I should have been over to pay you a visit these fine days. I got to the stage half an hour before it set out and counted the buns and tarts in a Pastry-cook's window and was just beginning with the Jellies. There was no one in the Coach who had a Mind to eat me like Mr. Sham-deaf. I shall be punctual in enquiring about next Thursday—

Your affectionate Brother
John

LXXVII.

To JAMES AUGUSTUS HESSEY.

9 October 1818.

My dear Hessey,

You are very good in sending me the letters from the Chronicle—and I am very bad in not acknowledging such a kindness sooner—pray forgive me. It has so chanced that I have had that paper every day—I have seen to-day's. I cannot but feel indebted to those gentlemen who have taken my part.

LXXVI. The situation is not very clearly indicated in this note, unless we are to read 'half an hour before it set out' as an elliptical expression for 'half an hour before it would have set out had there been passengers enough.' Otherwise, one cannot well see what was the explanation of the change of plan.

LXXVII. The article in 'The Quarterly Review' had now appeared,—foolish, trivial, almost ostentatiously dishonest, but far less vulgar and venomous in tone than the Wilson-Lockhart balderdash of *Blackwood*. The following abridgment seems necessary in the case of a composition immortalized as far as such things can be by the factitious importance in Keats's story ascribed to it by Shelley, Byron, and others. It appeared in No. XXXVII of the review, headed "April, 1818" on page 1, but described on the wrapper as "published in September, 1818."

"Reviewers have been sometimes accused of not reading the works which they affected to criticise. On the present occasion we shall anticipate the author's complaint, and honestly confess that we have not read his work. Not that we

As for the rest, I begin to get a little acquainted with my own strength and weakness.—Praise or blame has but a momentary effect on the man whose love of beauty in the abstract makes him a severe critique on his own Works. My own domestic criticism has given me pain without comparison beyond what Blackwood or the Quarterly could possibly inflict—and also when I feel I am right, no external praise can give me such a glow as my own solitary re-perception and ratification of what is fine. J. S. is perfectly right in regard to the slipshod Endymion. That it is so

have been wanting in our duty—far from it—indeed, we have made efforts almost as superhuman as the story itself appears to be, to get through it; but with the fullest stretch of our perseverance, we are forced to confess that we have not been able to struggle beyond the first of the four books of which this Poetic Romance consists. We should extremely lament this want of energy, or whatever it may be, on our parts, were it not for one consolation—namely, that we are no better acquainted with the meaning of the book through which we have so painfully toiled, than we are with that of the three which we have not looked into.

“It is not that Mr. Keats, (if that be his real name, for we almost doubt that any man in his senses would put his real name to such a rhapsody,) it is not, we say, that the author has not powers of language, rays of fancy, and gleams of genius—he has all these; but he is unhappily a disciple of the new school of what has been somewhere called Cockney poetry; which may be defined to consist of the most incongruous ideas in the most uncouth language.

“Of this school, Mr. Leigh Hunt, as we observed in a former Number, aspires to be the hierophant...

“This author is a copyist of Mr. Hunt; but he is more unintelligible, almost as rugged, twice as diffuse, and ten times more tiresome and absurd than his prototype, who, though he impudently presumed to seat himself in the chair of criticism, and to measure his own poetry by his own standard, yet generally had a meaning. But Mr. Keats had advanced no dogmas which he was bound to support by examples; his nonsense therefore is quite gratuitous; he writes it for its own sake, and, being bitten by Mr. Leigh Hunt's insane criticism, more than rivals the insanity of his poetry...

“Knowing within myself (he says) the manner in which this Poem has been produced, it is not without a feeling of regret that I make it public.—What manner I mean, will be *quite clear* to the reader, who must soon perceive great inexperience, immaturity, and every error denoting a feverish attempt, rather than a deed accomplished...

“The two first books, and indeed the two last, I feel sensible are not of such completion as to warrant their passing the press.'...

“Thus ‘the two first books’ are, even in his own judgment, unfit to appear, and ‘the two last’ are, it seems, in the same condition—and as two and two make four, and as that is the whole number of books, we have a clear and, we believe, a very just estimate of the entire work.

“Mr. Keats, however, deprecates criticism on this ‘immature and feverish work’ in terms which are themselves sufficiently feverish; and we confess that we should have abstained from inflicting upon him any of the tortures of the ‘fierce hell’ of criticism, which terrify his imagination, if he had not begged to be spared in order that he might write more; if we had not observed in him a certain degree of talent which deserves to be put in the right way, or which, at least, ought to be warned of the wrong; and if, finally, he had not told us that he is of an age and temper which imperiously require mental discipline.

“Of the story we have been able to make out but little; it seems to be mythological, and probably relates to the loves of Diana and Endymion; but of this, as

is no fault of mine. No!—though it may sound a little paradoxical. It is as good as I had power to make it—by myself. Had I been nervous about its being a perfect piece, and with that view asked advice, and trembled over every page, it would not have been written; for it is not in my nature to fumble—I will write independently.—I have written independently *without Judgment*. I may write independently, and *with Judgment*, hereafter. The Genius of Poetry must work out its own salvation in a man: It cannot be matured by law and precept, but

the scope of the work has altogether escaped us, we cannot speak with any degree of certainty... At first it appeared to us, that Mr. Keats had been amusing himself and wearying his readers with an immeasurable game at *bouts-rimés*; but, if we recollect rightly, it is an indispensable condition at this play, that the rhymes when filled up shall have a meaning; and our author, as we have already hinted, has no meaning. He seems to us to write a line at random, and then he follows not the thought excited by this line, but that suggested by the *rhyme* with which it concludes. There is hardly a complete couplet inclosing a complete idea in the whole book. He wanders from one subject to another, from the association, not of ideas but of sounds, and the work is composed of hemistichs which, it is quite evident, have forced themselves upon the author by the mere force of the catch-words on which they turn...

"But enough of Mr. Leigh Hunt and his simple neophyte.—If any one should be bold enough to purchase this 'Poetic Romance,' and so much more patient, than ourselves, as to get beyond the first book, and so much more fortunate as to find a meaning, we entreat him to make us acquainted with his success; we shall then return to the task which we now abandon in despair, and endeavour to make all due amends to Mr. Keats and to our readers."

No doubt the talk in Keats's set about this business had been voluminous enough by the time Hessey sent him the letters published on the other side,—the following two letters to the editor of 'The Morning Chronicle' printed in that paper on Saturday the 3rd and Thursday the 8th of October 1818.

"Sir, Although I am aware that literary squabbles are of too uninteresting and interminable a nature for your Journal, yet there are occasions when acts of malice and gross injustice towards an author may be properly brought before the public through such a medium.—Allow me, then, without further preface, to refer you to an article in the last Number of The Quarterly Review, professing to be a Critique on 'The Poems of John Keats.' Of John Keats I know nothing; from his Preface I collect that he is very young—no doubt a heinous sin; and I have been informed that he has incurred the additional guilt of an acquaintance with Mr. Leigh Hunt. That this latter Gentleman and the Editor of The Quarterly Review have long been at war, must be known to every one in the least acquainted with the literary gossip of the day. Mr. L. Hunt, it appears, has thought highly of the poetical talents of Mr. Keats; hence Mr. K. is doomed to feel the merciless tomahawk of the Reviewers, termed Quarterly, I presume from the *modus operandi*. From a perusal of the criticism, I was led to the work itself. I would, Sir, that your limits would permit a few extracts from this poem. I dare appeal to the taste and judgment of your readers, that beauties of the highest order may be found in almost every page—that there are also many, very many passages indicating haste and carelessness, I will not deny; I will go further, and assert that a real friend of the author would have dissuaded him from an immediate publication.

"Had the genius of Lord Byron sunk under the discouraging sneers of an Edinburgh Review the nineteenth century would scarcely yet have been termed the Augustan ara of Poetry. Let Mr. Keats too persevere—he has talents of [no] common stamp; this is the hastily written tribute of a stranger, who ventures to

by sensation and watchfulness in itself. That which is creative must create itself. In "Endymion," I leaped headlong into the sea, and thereby have become better acquainted with the Soundings, the quicksands, and the rocks, than if I had stayed upon the green shore, and piped a silly pipe, and took tea and comfortable advice. I was never afraid of failure; for I would sooner fail than not be among the greatest. But I am nigh getting into a rant. So, with remembrances to Taylor and Woodhouse &c. I am

Yours very sincerely
John Keats.

predict that Mr. K. is capable of producing a poem that shall challenge the admiration of every reader of true taste and feeling; nay if he will give up his acquaintance with Mr. Leigh Hunt, and apostatise in his friendships, his principles and his politics (if he have any), he may even command the approbation of the Quarterly Review.

"I have not heard to whom public opinion has assigned this exquisite morcean of critical acumen. If the Translator of Juvenal be its author, I would refer him to the manly and pathetic narrative prefixed to that translation, to the touching history of genius oppressed by and struggling with innumerable difficulties, yet finally triumphing under patronage and encouragement. If the Biographer of Kirke White have done Mr. Keats this cruel wrong, let him remember his own just and feeling expostulation with the Monthly Reviewer, who 'sat down to blast the hopes of a boy, who had confessed to him all his hopes and all his difficulties.' If the 'Admiralty Scribe' (for he too is a Reviewer) be the critic, let him compare the 'Battle of Talavera' with 'Endymion.'

I am, Sir, Your obedient servant,

J. S."

The references in the last paragraph are so well chosen as to give some countenance to the suggestion that John Scott was the writer of the letter. But why not James Smith? The 'Translator of Juvenal' was of course William Gifford, the editor of 'The Quarterly Review.' The 'Biographer of Kirke White' was Robert Southey; and the author of 'The Battle of Talavera' was John Wilson Croker, Secretary of the Admiralty, who, like Southey, was one of the most prominent contributors to the 'Quarterly.' He it was who wrote the abominable article. I have seen no suggestion as to the identity of "R. B." who wrote the second letter, which reads thus:—

"Sir,—The spirited and feeling remonstrance of your correspondent J. S. against the cruelty and injustice of the Quarterly Review, has most ably anticipated the few remarks which I had intended to address to you on the subject. But your well known liberality in giving admission to every thing calculated to do justice to oppressed and injured merit, induces me to trespass further on your valuable columns, by a few extracts from Mr. Keat's [*sic*] Poem. As the Reviewer professes to have read only the first book, I have confined my quotations to that part of the Poem; and I leave your readers to judge whether the Critic who could pass over such beauties as these lines contain, and condemn the whole Poem as 'consisting of the most incongruous ideas in the most uncouth language,' is very implicitly to be relied on.

I am, Sir, Your obedient servant,

R. B."

Temple, Oct. 3^d 1818.

The extracts range over pages 12 to 42 of the original edition of 'Endymion' (pages 77 to 98 of the first volume of this edition).

LXXVIII.

To FANNY KEATS.

Miss Tuckey's, Walthamstow.

Hampstead, Friday Morn

[Postmark, 16 October 1818.]

My dear Fanny,

You must not condemn me for not being punctual to Thursday, for I really did not know whether it would not affect poor Tom too much to see you. You know how it hurt him to part with you the last time. At all events you shall hear from me; and if Tom keeps pretty well to-morrow, I will see Mr. Abbey the next day, and endeavour to settle that you shall be with us on Tuesday or Wednesday. I have good news from George—He has landed safely with our Sister—they are both in good health—their prospects are good—and they are by this time nighing to their journey's end—you shall hear the particulars soon.

Your affectionate Brother

John

Tom's love to you.

LXXIX.

To FANNY KEATS.

Miss Tuckey's, Walthamstow.

[Postmark, Hampstead, 26 October 1818.]

My dear Fanny,

I called on Mr. Abbey in the beginning of last Week : when he seemed averse to letting you come again from having heard that you had been to other places besides Well Walk. I do not mean to say you did wrongly in speaking of it, for there should rightly be no objection to such things : but you know with what People we are obliged in the course of Childhood to associate, whose conduct forces us into duplicity and falsehood to them. To the worst of People we should be openhearted : but it is as well as things are to be prudent in making any communication to any one, that may throw an impediment in the way of any of the little pleasures you may have. I do not recommend duplicity but prudence with such people. Perhaps I am talking too deeply for you : if you do not now, you will understand what I mean in the course of a few years. I think poor Tom is a little Better : he sends his love to you. I shall call on Mr. Abbey to-morrow : when I hope to settle when to see you again. Mrs. Dilke has been for some time at Brighton—she is expected home in a day or two. She will be pleased I am sure with your present. I will try for permission for you to remain here all Night should Mrs. D. return in time.

Your affectionate Brother

John —

LXXX.

To RICHARD WOODHOUSE.

[Postmark, Hampstead, 27 October 1818.]

My dear Woodhouse,

Your letter gave me great satisfaction, more on account of its friendliness than any relish of that matter in it which is accounted so acceptable in the "genus irritabile." The best answer I can give you is in a clerklike manner to make some observations on two principal points which seem to point like indices into the midst of the whole pro and con about genius, and views, and achievements, and ambition, et cætera. 1st. As to the poetical character itself (I mean that sort, of which, if I am anything, I am a member; that sort distinguished from the Wordsworthian, or egotistical Sublime; which is a thing per se, and stands alone), it is not itself—it has no self—It is every thing and nothing—It has no character—it enjoys light and shade; it lives in gusto, be it foul or fair, high or low, rich or poor, mean or elevated.—It has as much delight in conceiving an Iago as an Imogen. What shocks the virtuous philosopher delights the chameleon poet. It does no harm from its relish of the dark side of things, any more than from its taste for the bright one, because they both end in speculation. A poet is the most unpoetical of anything in existence, because he has no Identity—he is continually in for and filling some other body. The Sun,—the Moon,—the Sea, and men and women, who are creatures of impulse, are poetical, and have about them an unchangeable attribute; the poet has none, no identity—he is certainly the most unpoetical of all God's creatures.—If then he has no self, and if I am a poet, where is the wonder that I should say I would write no more? Might I not at that very instant have been cogitating on the Characters of Saturn and Ops? It is a wretched thing to confess; but it is a very fact, that not one word I ever utter can be taken for granted as an opinion growing out of my identical Nature—how can it, when I have no Nature? When I am in a room with people, if I ever am free from speculating on creations of my own brain, then, not myself goes home to myself, but the identity of every one in the room begins to press upon me, so that I am in a very little time annihilated—not only among men; it would be the same in a nursery of Children. I know not whether I make myself wholly understood: I hope enough so to let you see that no dependence is to be placed on what I said that day.

LXXX. Mr. Colvin publishes a note of Woodhouse's recording that, in this letter Keats replies to one of protest from his friend, based on some words the poet had let fall "about six weeks back, when we dined together at Mr. Hessey's, respecting his continuing to write; which he seemed very doubtful of."

In the 2d place, I will speak of my views, and of the life I purpose to myself. I am ambitious of doing the world some good: if I should be spared, that may be the work of maturer years—in the interval I will assay to reach to as high a summit in poetry as the nerve bestowed upon me will suffer. The faint conceptions I have of poems to come bring the blood frequently into my forehead. All I hope is, that I may not lose all interest in human affairs—that the solitary Indifference I feel for applause, even from the finest spirits, will not blunt any acuteness of vision I may have. I do not think it will. I feel assured I should write from the mere yearning and fondness I have for the beautiful, even if my night's labours should be burnt every Morning, and no eye ever shine upon them. But even now I am perhaps not speaking from myself, but from some Character in whose soul I now live.

I am sure, however, that this next sentence is from myself—I feel your anxiety, good opinion, and friendship, in the highest degree, and am

Yours most sincerely
John Keats.

LXXXI.

TO GEORGE AND GEORGIANA KEATS.

[October 1818.]

My dear George,

There was a part in your Letter which gave me a great deal of pain, that where you lament not receiving Letters from England. I intended to have written immediately on my return from Scotland (which was two Months earlier than I had intended on account of my own as well as Tom's health), but then I was told by Mrs. W[ylie] that you had said you would not wish any one to write till we had heard from you. This I thought odd and now I see that it could not have been so; yet, at the time I suffered my unreflecting head to be satisfied, and went on in that sort of abstract careless and restless Life with which you are well acquainted. This sentence should it give you any uneasiness do not let it last for before I finish it will be explained away to your satisfaction.

LXXXI. Lord Houghton says:—"The journal-letters to his brother and sister in America are the best records of his outer existence. I give them in their simplicity, being assured that thus they are best. They are full of a genial life which will be understood and valued by all to whom a book of this nature presents any interest whatever: and, when it is remembered how carelessly they are written, how little the writer ever dreamt of their being redeemed from the far West or exposed to any other eyes than those of the most familiar affection, they become a mirror in which the individual character is shown with indisputable truth, and from which the fairest judgment of his very self can be drawn."

I grieve to say I am not sorry you had not Letters at Philadelphia ; you could have had no good news of Tom and I have been withheld on his account from beginning these many days ; I could not bring myself to say the truth, that he is no better but much worse. However it must be told and you must my dear Brother and Sister take example from me and bear up against any Calamity for my sake as I do for yours. Our's are ties which independent of their own Sentiment are sent us by providence to prevent the deleterious effects of one great solitary grief. I have Fanny¹ and I have you—three people whose Happiness to me is sacred—and it does annul that selfish sorrow which I should otherwise fall into, living as I do with poor Tom who looks upon me as his only comfort—the tears will come into your Eyes—let them—and embrace each other—thank heaven for what happiness you have, and after thinking a moment or two that you suffer in common with all Mankind hold it not a sin to regain your cheerfulness.

I will relieve you of one uneasiness overleaf: I returned I said on account of my health—I am now well from a bad sore throat which came of bog trotting in the Island of Mull—of which you shall hear by the copies I shall make from my Scotch Letters.

Your content in each other is a delight to me which I cannot express—the Moon is now shining full and brilliant—she is the same to me in Matter, what you are to me in Spirit. If you were here my dear Sister I could not pronounce the words which I can write to you from a distance : I have a tenderness for you, and an admiration which I feel to be as great and more chaste than I can have for any woman in the world. You will mention Fanny—her character is not formed, her identity does not press upon me as yours does. I hope from the bottom of my heart that I may one day feel as much for her as I do for you—I know not how it is, but I have never made any acquaintance of my own—nearly all through your medium my dear Brother—through you I know not only a Sister but a glorious human being. And now I am talking of those to whom you have made me known I cannot forbear mentioning Haslam as a most kind and obliging and constant friend. His behaviour to Tom during my absence and since my return has endeared him to me for ever—besides his anxiety about you. To-morrow I shall call on your Mother and exchange information with her. On Tom's account I have not been able to pass so much time with her as I would otherwise have done—I have seen her but twice—one I dined with her and Charles. She was well, in good spirits, and I kept her laughing at my bad jokes. We went to tea at Mrs. Millar's, and in going were particularly struck with

¹ The allusion is of course to Fanny Keats.

the light and shade through the Gateway at the Horse Guards. I intend to write you such Volumes that it will be impossible for me to keep any order or method in what I write : that will come first which is uppermost in my Mind, not that which is uppermost in my heart—besides I should wish to give you a picture of our Lives here whenever by a touch I can do it ; even as you must see by the last sentence our walk past Whitehall all in good health and spirits—this I am certain of, because I felt so much pleasure from the simple idea of your playing a game at Cricket. At Mrs. Millar's I saw Henry quite well—there was Miss Keasle—and the good-natured Miss Waldegrave—Mrs. Millar began a long story and you know it is her Daughter's way to help her on as though her tongue were ill of the gout. Mrs. M. certainly tells a story as though she had been taught her alphabet in Crutched Friars. Dilke has been very unwell ; I found him very ailing on my return—he was under Medical care for some time, and then went to the Sea Side whence he has returned well. Poor little Mrs. D. has had another gallstone attack ; she was well ere I returned—she is now at Brighton. Dilke was greatly pleased to hear from you, and will write a letter for me to enclose. He seems greatly desirous of hearing from you of the settlement itself.

I came by ship from Inverness, and was nine days at Sea without being sick—a little qualm now and then put me in mind of you—however as soon as you touch the shore all the horrors of Sickness are soon forgotten, as was the case with a Lady on board who could not hold her head up all the way. We had not been in the Thames an hour before her tongue began to some tune ; paying off as it was fit she should all old scores. I was the only Englishman on board. There was a downright Scotchman who hearing that there had been a bad crop of Potatoes in England had brought some triumphant specimens from Scotland—these he exhibited with national pride to all the Lightermen and Watermen from the Nore to the Bridge. I fed upon beef all the way ; not being able to eat the thick Porridge which the Ladies managed to manage with large awkward horn spoons into the bargain. Severn has had a narrow escape of his Life from a Typhous fever ; he is now gaining strength. Reynolds has returned from a six weeks' enjoyment in Devonshire—he is well, and persuades me to publish my "Pot of Basil" as an answer to the attacks made on me in Blackwood's Magazine and the Quarterly Review. There have been two letters in my defence in the Chronicle and one in the Examiner, copied from the Alfred Exeter paper, and written by Reynolds. I don't know who wrote those in the Chronicle—this is a mere matter of the moment—I think I shall be among the English Poets after my death. Even as a Matter of present interest the attempt to crush me in the Quarterly has only brought me more

into notice, and it is a common expression among book men, "I wonder the Quarterly should cut its own throat."

It does me not the least harm in Society to make me appear little and ridiculous: I know when a man is superior to me and give him all due respect—he will be the last to laugh at me and as for the rest I feel that I make an impression upon them which ensures me personal respect while I am in sight whatever they may say when my back is turned.¹ Poor Haydon's eyes will not suffer him to proceed with his picture—he has been in the Country—I have seen him but once since my return. I

¹For the 'Blackwood' and 'Quarterly' articles and the letters in 'The Chronicle,' see *ante*, pages 164-5 and 168-71. It is well to add here an abridgment of Reynolds's article published in 'The Alfred, West of England Journal and General Advertiser,' for Tuesday the 6th of October 1818. It was originally headed "Literature. The Quarterly Review—Mr Keats." In 'The Examiner' for Sunday the 11th of October 1818 the article appears preceded by the following note under the head of "Literary Notices":—"A manly and judicious letter, signed J. S. appeared in the Morning Chronicle the other day, respecting the article in the Quarterly Review on the Endymion of the young poet Mr. Keats. It is one of several public animadversions, which that half-witted, half-hearted Review has called indignantly forth on the occasion. 'This is the hastily-written tribute,' says the writer, 'of a stranger, who ventures to predict that Mr. K. is capable of producing a poem that shall challenge the admiration of every reader of true taste and feeling; nay, if he will give up his acquaintance with Mr. Leigh Hunt, and apostatise in his friendships, his principles, and his politics (if he have any), he may even command the approbation of the Quarterly Review.'—We really believe so; but Mr. Keats is of a spirit which can afford to dispense with such approbation, and stand by his friend. We should have given the whole of this letter, but we have since met with another in the Alfred Exeter paper, which is more elaborate on the subject; and we have not room for both." Here follows Reynolds's article—abridged:—

"We have met with a singular instance, in the last number of the Quarterly Review, of that unfeeling arrogance, and cold ignorance, which so strangely marked the minds and hearts of Government sycophants and Government writers. The Poem of a young man of genius, which evinces more natural power than any other work of this day, is abused and cried down, in terms which would disgrace any other pens than those used in the defence of an Oliver or a Castles [Government spies]. We have read the Poetic Romance of Endymion ... with no little delight: and could hardly believe that it was written by so young a man as the preface infers. Mr. Keats, the author of it, is a genius of the highest order; and no one but a Lottery Commissioner and Government Pensioner (both of which Mr. William Gifford, the Editor of the Quarterly Review, is) could, with a false and remorseless pen, have striven to frustrate hopes and aims, so youthful and so high as this young Poet nurses. The Monthly Reviewers, it will be remembered, endeavoured, some few years back, to crush the rising heart of Kirk[e] White; and indeed they in part generated that melancholy which ultimately destroyed him; but the world saw the cruelty, and, with one voice, hailed the genius which malignity would have repressed, and lifted it to fame. Reviewers are creatures 'that stab men in the dark!':—young and enthusiastic spirits are their dearest prey. Our readers will not easily forget the brutality with which the Quarterly Reviewers, in a late number of their ministerial book, commented on a work of an intelligent and patriotic woman, whose ardour and independence happened to be high enough to make them her enemies. The language used by these Government

hurry matters together here because I do not know when the Mail sails—I shall enquire to-morrow, and then shall know whether to be particular or general in my letter—you shall have at least two sheets a day till it does sail whether it be three days or a fortnight—and then I will begin a fresh one for the next Month. The Miss Reynoldses are very kind to me—but they have lately displeased me much and in this way. Now I am coming the Richardson. On my return the first day I called they were in a sort of taking or bustle about a Cousin of theirs who having fallen out with her Grandpapa in a serious manner

critics, was lower than man would dare to utter to female ears; but Party knows no distinctions,—no proprieties,—and a woman is the best of prey for its malignity, because it is the gentlest and the most undefended. We certainly think that Criticism might vent its petty passions on other subjects; that it might chuse its objects from the vain, the dangerous, and the powerful, and not from the young and the unprotected.

‘It should strike hearts of age and care,
And spare the youthful and the fair.’

The cause of the unmerciful condemnation which has been passed on Mr. Keats, is pretty apparent to all who have watched the intrigues of literature, and the wily and unsparing contrivances of political parties. This young and powerful writer was noticed, some little time back, in the Examiner; and pointed out, by its Editor, as one who was likely to revive the early vigour of English poetry. Such a prediction was a fine, but dangerous compliment, to Mr. Keats: it exposed him instantly to the malice of the Quarterly Review. Certain it is, that hundreds of fashionable and flippant readers, will henceforth set down this young Poet as a pitiable and nonsensical writer, merely on the assertions of some single heartless critic, who has just energy enough to despise what is good, because it would militate against his pleasantry, if he were to praise it.

“The genius of Mr. Keats is peculiarly classical; and, with the exception of a few faults, which are the natural followers of youth, his imaginations and his language have a spirit and an intensity which we should in vain look for in half the popular poets of the day. Lord Byron is a splendid and noble egotist.—He visits Classical shores; roams over romantic lands, and wanders through magnificent forests; courses the dark and restless waves of the sea, and rocks his spirit on the midnight lakes; but no spot is conveyed to our minds, that is not peopled by the gloomy and ghastly feelings of one proud and solitary man. It is as if he and the world were the only two things which the air clothed.—His lines are majestic vanities;—his poetry always is marked with a haughty selfishness;—he writes loftily, because he is the spirit of an ancient family;—he is liked by most of his readers, because he is a Lord. If a common man were to dare to be as moody, as contemptuous, and as misanthropical, the world would laugh at him. There must be a coronet marked on all his little pieces of poetical insolence, or the world would not countenance them. Mr. Keats has none of this egotism;—this daring selfishness, which is a stain on the robe of poesy.—His feelings are full, earnest, and original, as those of the olden writers were and are; they are made for all time, not for the drawing-room and the moment. Mr. Keats always speaks of, and describes nature, with an awe and a humility, but with a deep and almost breathless affection.—He knows that Nature is better and older than he is, and he does not put himself on an equality with her. You do not see him, when you see her. The moon, and the mountainous foliage of the woods, and the azure sky, and the ruined and magic temple; the rock, the desert, and the sea; the leaf of the forest, and the embossed foam of the most living ocean, are the spirits of his

was invited by Mrs. R[eynolds] to take Asylum in her house. She is an East Indian and ought to be her Grandfather's Heir. At the time I called Mrs. R. was in conference with her up stairs and the young Ladies were warm in her praises down stairs, calling her genteel, interesting and a thousand other pretty things to which I gave no heed, not being partial to 9 days' wonders. Now all is completely changed—they hate her, and from what I hear she is not without faults—of a real kind: but she has others which are more apt to make women of inferior charms hate her. She is not a Cleopatra, but she is at least a Charmian. She has a rich eastern look; she has fine eyes and fine manners. When she comes into a room she makes an impression the same as the Beauty of a Leopardess. She is too fine and too conscious of herself to repulse any Man who may address her—from habit she thinks that nothing

poetry; but he does not bring them in his own hand, or obtrude his person before you, when you are looking at them. Poetry is a thing of generalities—a wanderer amid persons and things—not a pauser over one thing, or with one person. The mind of Mr. Keats, like the minds of our older poets, goes round the universe in its speculations and its dreams. It does not set itself a task. The manners of the world, the fictions and the wonders of other worlds, are its subjects; not the pleasures of hope, or the pleasures of memory. The true poet confines his imagination to no one thing—his soul is an invisible ode to the passions—He does not make a home for his mind in one land—its productions are an universal story, not an eastern tale. The fancies of Moore are exquisitely beautiful, as fancies, but they are always of one colour;—his feelings are pathetic, but they are 'still harping on my daughter.' The true pathetic is to be found in the reflections on things, not in the moods and miseries of one person. There is not one poet of the present day, that enjoys any popularity that will live; each writes for his book-sellers and the ladies of fashion, and not for the voice of centuries. Time is a lover of old books, and he suffers few new ones to become old. Posterity is a difficult mark to hit, and few minds can send the arrow full home. Wordsworth might have safely cleared the rapids in the stream of time, but he lost himself by looking at his own image in the waters. Coleridge stands bewildered in the cross-road of fame;—his genius will commit suicide, and be buried in it. Southey is Poet Laureate, 'so there is no heed to be taken of him.' Campbell has relied on two stools, 'The Pleasures of Hope,' and 'Gertrude of Wyoming,' but he will come to the ground, after the fashion of the old proverb. The journey of fame is an endless one; and does Mr. Rogers think that pumps and silk stockings (which his genius wears) will last him the whole way? Poetry is the coyest creature that ever was wooed by man: she has something of the coquette in her; for she flirts with many, and seldom loves one.

"Mr. Keats has certainly not perfected any thing yet; but he has the power, we think, within him, and it is in consequence of such an opinion that we have written these few hasty observations. If he should ever see this, he will not regret to find that all the country is not made up of Quarterly Reviewers. All that we wish is, that our Readers could read the Poem, as we have done, before they assent to its condemnation—they will find passages of singular feeling, force, and pathos. We have the highest hopes of this young Poet. We are obscure men, it is true, and not gifted with that perilous power of mind, and truth of judgment which are possessed by Mr. Croker, Mr. Canning, Mr. Barrow, or Mr. Gifford, (all 'honourable men,' and writers in the Quarterly Review). We live far from the world of letters,—out of the pale of fashionable criticism,—aloof from the atmo-

particular. I always find myself more at ease with such a woman; the picture before me always gives me a life and animation which I cannot possibly feel with anything inferior. I am at such times too much occupied in admiring to be awkward or on a tremble. I forget myself entirely because

sphere of a Court; but we are surrounded by a beautiful country, and love Poetry, which we read out of doors, as well as in. We think we see glimpses of a high mind in this young man, and surely the feeling is better that urges us to nourish its strength, than that which prompts the Quarterly Reviewer to crush it in its youth, and for ever. If, however, the mind of Mr. Keats be of the quality we think it to be of, it will not be cast down by this wanton and empty attack. Malice is a thing of the scorpion kind—It drives the sting into its own heart. The very passages which the Quarterly Review quotes as ridiculous, have in them the beauty that sent us to the Poem itself.... Two things have struck us on the perusal of this singular poem. The first is, that Mr. Keats excels, in what Milton excelled—the power of putting a spirit of life and novelty into the Heathen Mythology. The second is, that in the structure of his verse, and the sinewy quality of his thoughts, Mr. Keats greatly resembles old Chapman, the nervous translator of Homer. His mind has ‘*thews and limbs like to its ancestors.*’ Mr. Gifford, who knows something of the old dramatists, ought to have paused before he sanctioned the abuse of a spirit kindred with them. If he could not feel, he ought to know better.”

With reference to the mention of Haydon's eyes on page 177, it is to be said that he was staying with his married sister at Bridgewater, whence he had sent Keats a letter dated the 25th of September. The body of the letter appears to have been dictated to an amanuensis—the signature and postscript written by himself. This document, said to be in the collection of Mr. Arnold of New York, was published in ‘*The Century Magazine*’ for October 1895. It is as follows:—

Bridgewater, September 25th.

[Postmarked 1818.]

My Dear Keats:

Here I am, as Shakespeare says, “chewing the cud of sweet and bitter fancy,” solitary in the midst of society, with no human being to exchange a notion with except my sister, and she begins to be so occupied with her little brats that if I attempt to quote Shakespeare to her I am ordered into silence for fear I should wake the children. I came here for repose of mind. As I am now getting better, I am again on the rack to be again in the midst of all the objects of my ambition. I am getting about again, my hero; and I hope to God I shall yet finish my picture to the satisfaction of all of you. I am longing to be among you, and hear your account of your last tour. If it has done as much good to the *inside* as the outside of your head you will feel the effects of it as long as you live. I shall leave this place to-morrow or Monday, and hope to be in town by Wednesday at furthest. I hope your brother Tom does not suffer much—poor fellow!—I shall never forget his look when I saw him last. I can never say as much when I dictate a letter as when I write it myself; and this, I hope, will be a sufficient excuse for not writing a longer one to you. At any rate, this is better treatment than you gave me when you went on your tour.

Believe me, my dear Keats, most affectionately and sincerely,

Yours ever, B. R. Haydon.

P.S.—To give you an idea of the elegant taste of this place, the other day in company, when I illustrated something by a quotation, one of the company said with great simplicity, “Lord, Mr. Haydon, you are full of *scraps*!” Adieu! my eyes will not permit me.

I live in her. You will by this time think I am in love with her ; so before I go any further I will tell you I am not—she kept me awake one Night as a tune of Mozart's might do. I speak of the thing as a pastime and an amusement than which I can feel none deeper than a conversation with an imperial woman the very 'yes' and 'no' of whose Lips is to me a Banquet. I don't cry to take the Moon home with me in my Pocket nor do I fret to leave her behind me. I like her and her like because one has no *sensations*—what we both are is taken for granted. You will suppose I have by this had much talk with her—no such thing—there are the Miss Reynoldses on the look out. They think I don't admire her because I did not stare at her. They call her a flirt to me. What a want of knowledge ! She walks across a room in such a Manner that a Man is drawn towards her with a magnetic Power. This they call flirting ! they do not know things. They do not know what a Woman is. I believe tho' she has faults—the same as Charmian and Cleopatra might have had. Yet she is a fine thing speaking in a worldly way : for there are two distinct tempers of mind in which we judge of things—the worldly, theatrical and pantomimical ; and the unearthly, spiritual and ethereal—in the former Buonaparte, Lord Byron and this Charmian hold the first place in our Minds ; in the latter, John Howard, Bishop Hooker rocking his child's cradle, and you my dear Sister are the conquering feelings. As a Man in the world I love the rich talk of a Charmian ; as an eternal Being I love the thought of you. I should like her to ruin me, and I should like you to save me.¹ Do not think my dear Brother from this that my Passions are headlong or likely to be ever of any pain to you—

“I am free from Men of Pleasure's cares,
By dint of feelings far more deep than theirs.”

This is Lord Byron, and is one of the finest things he has said. I have no town talk for you, as I have not been much among people—as for Politics they are in my opinion only sleepy because they will soon be too wide awake. Perhaps not—for the long and continued Peace of England itself has given us notions of personal safety which are likely to prevent the re-establishment of our national Honesty. There is, of a truth, nothing manly or sterling in any part of the Government. There are many Madmen in the Country, I have no doubt, who would like to be beheaded on Tower Hill merely for the sake of

¹ For an allusion to this cousin, see page 167 *ante*. Miss Jane Cox was born in India, and was a daughter of the only brother of Mrs. Reynolds, whose maiden name was Cox. The quarrel of the dark beauty Jane with her grandfather did not arise from bad temper ; but from some other cause. Her grandfather was very fond of her ; and they were ultimately reconciled.

éclat ; there are many Men like Hunt who from a principle of taste would like to see things go on better, there are many like Sir F. Burdett who like to sit at the head of political dinners,—but there are none prepared to suffer in obscurity for their Country. The motives of our worst men are Interest and of our best Vanity. We have no Milton, no Algernon Sidney—Governors in these days lose the title of Man in exchange for that of Diplomat and Minister. We breathe in a sort of Official Atmosphere. All the departments of Government have strayed far from Simplicity, which is the greatest of strength. There is as much difference in this respect between the present Government and Oliver Cromwell's as there is between the 12 Tables of Rome and the volumes of Civil Law which were digested by Justinian. A Man now entitled Chancellor has the same honour paid him whether he be a Hog or a Lord Bacon. No sensation is created by Greatness but by the number of Orders a Man has at his Button holes. Notwithstanding the part which the Liberals take in the Cause of Napoleon I cannot but think he has done more harm to the life of Liberty than any one else could have done : not that the divine right Gentlemen have done or intend to do any good—no, they have taken a Lesson of him, and will do all the further harm he would have done without any of the good. The worst thing he has done is, that he has taught them how to organize their monstrous armies. The Emperor Alexander it is said intends to divide his Empire as did Diocletian—creating two Czars besides himself, and continuing the supreme Monarch of the whole. Should he do this and they for a series of Years keep peaceable among themselves Russia may spread her conquest even to China—I think a very likely thing that China itself may fall. Turkey certainly will. Meanwhile European North Russia will hold its horns against the rest of Europe, intriguing constantly with France. Dilke, whom you know to be a Godwin perfectability Man, pleases himself with the idea that America will be the country to take up the human intellect where England leaves off—I differ there with him greatly. A country like the United States, whose greatest Men are Franklins and Washingtons, will never do that. They are great Men doubtless, but how are they to be compared to those our countrymen Milton and the two Sydneys? The one is a philosophical Quaker full of mean and thrifty maxims, the other sold the very Charger who had taken him through all his Battles. Those Americans are great, but they are not sublime Man—the humanity of the United States can never reach the sublime. Birkbeck's mind is too much in the American style—you must endeavour to infuse a little Spirit of another sort into the settlement ; always with great caution, for thereby you may do your descendants more good than you may imagine. If I had a prayer to make for any

great good, next to Tom's recovery, it should be that one of your Children should be the first American Poet. I have a great mind to make a prophecy, and they say prophecies work out their own fulfilment¹—

'Tis 'the witching time of night'
 Orbed is the moon and bright
 And the Stars they glisten, glisten
 Seeming with bright eyes to listen
 For what listen they?
 For a song and for a charm
 See they glisten in alarm
 And the Moon is waxing warm
 To hear what I shall say.
 Moon keep wide thy golden ears
 Harken Stars, and hearken Spheres
 Harken thou eternal Sky
 I sing an infant's Lullaby
 A pretty Lullaby!
 Listen, Listen, listen, listen
 Glisten, glisten, glisten, glisten
 And hear my lullaby!
 Though the Rushes that will make
 Its cradle still are in the lake:
 Though the flinnen-then-that will be
 Its swathe is on the cotton tree;
 Though the woollen that will keep
 It warm, is on the silly sheep;
 Listen Stars-Starlight, listen, listen,
 Glisten, Glisten, glisten, glisten
 And hear my lullaby!
 Child! I see thee! Child! I've found thee
 Midst of the quiet all around thee!²
 Child I see thee! Child I spy thee
 And thy mother sweet is nigh thee!
 Child I know thee! Child no more
 But a Poet *evermore*
 See, See the Lyre, the Lyre
 In a flame of fire
 Upon the little cradle's top
 Flaring, flaring, flaring
 Past the eyesight's bearing—
 Awake it from its sleep
 And see if it can keep

¹ In the original 'fullfillment.'

² Keats wrote 'Midst of quiet all around thee!'—then inserted 'the' before 'around'—struck it out and put it before 'quiet'—and forgot to strike out 'of.'

Its eyes upon the blaze.
 Amaze, Amaze !
 It stares, it stares, it stares
 It dares what no one dares
 It lifts its little hand into the flame
 Unharm'd, and on the strings
 Paddles a little tune and-signs sings
 With dumb endeavour sweetly !
 Bard art thou completely !
 Little Child
 O' the western wild
 Bard art thou completely !—
 Sweetly with dumb endeavour—
 A Poet now or never !
 Little Child
 O' the western wild
 A Poet now or never !

This is Friday, I know not what day of the Month—I will enquire to-morrow, for it is fit you should know the time I am writing. I went to Town yesterday, and calling at Mrs. Millar's was told that your Mother would not be found at home—I met Henry as I turned the corner—I had no leisure to return, so I left the letters with him. He was looking very well. Poor Tom is no better to-night—I am afraid to ask him what Message I shall send from him. And here I could go on complaining of my Misery, but I will keep myself cheerful for your Sakes. With a great deal of trouble I have succeeded in getting Fanny to Hampstead. She has been several times. Mr. Lewis has been very kind to Tom all the summer, there has scarce a day passed but he has visited him, and not one day without bringing or sending some fruit of the nicest kind. He has been very assiduous in his enquiries after you. It would give the old Gentleman a great deal of pleasure if you would send him a Sheet enclosed in the next parcel to me, after you receive this—how long it will be first.—Why did I not write to Philadelphia? Really I am sorry for that neglect. I wish to go on writing ad infinitum to you—I wish for interesting matter and a pen as swift as the wind. But the fact is I go so little into the Crowd now that I have nothing fresh and fresh every day to speculate upon except my own Whims and Theories. I have been but once to Haydon's, once to Hunt's, once to Rice's, once to Hessey's. I have not seen Taylor, I have not been to the Theatre. Now if I had been many times to all these and was still in the habit of going I could on my return at night have each day something new to tell you of without any stop. But now I have such a dearth that when I get to the end of this sentence and to the bottom of this page I must wait till I can find

something interesting to you before I begin another. After all it is not much matter what it may be about, for the very words from such a distance penned by this hand will be grateful to you—even though I were to copy out the tale of Mother Hubbard or Little Red Riding Hood. I have been over to Dilke's this evening—there with Brown we have been talking of different and indifferent Matters—of Euclid, of Metaphysics, of the Bible, of Shakespeare, of the horrid System and consequences of the fagging at great schools. I know not yet how large a parcel I can send—I mean by way of Letters—I hope there can be no objection to my dowling up a quire made into a small compass. That is the manner in which I shall write. I shall send you more than Letters—I mean a tale—which I must begin on account of the activity of my Mind ; of its inability to remain at rest. It must be prose and not very exciting. I must do this because in the way I am at present situated I have too many interruptions to a train of feeling to be able to write Poetry. So I shall write this Tale, and if I think it worth while get a duplicate made before I send it off to you.

This is a fresh beginning the 21st October. Charles and Henry were with us on Sunday, and they brought me your Letter to your Mother—we agreed to get a Packet off to you as soon as possible. I shall dine with your Mother to-morrow, when they have promised to have their Letters ready. I shall send as soon as possible without thinking of the little you may have from me in the first parcel, as I intend, as I said before, to begin another Letter of more regular information. Here I want to communicate so largely in a little time that I am puzzled where to direct my attention. Haslam has promised to let me know from Capper and Hazlewood. For want of something better I shall proceed to give you some extracts from my Scotch Letters. Yet now I think on it why not send you the letters themselves—I have three of them at present—I believe Haydon has two which I will get in time.¹ I dined with your Mother and Henry at Mrs. Millar's on Thursday, when they gave me their Letters—Charles' I have not yet—he has promised to send it. The thought of sending my Scotch Letters has determined me to enclose a few more which I have received and which will give you the best cue to how I am going on, better than you could otherwise know. Your Mother was well and I was sorry I could not stop later. I called on Hunt

¹ At this point there was clearly a break though there is no new paragraph commenced. The last fresh beginning was that of Wednesday the 21st of October : he was to dine with Mrs. Wylie and Henry on the Thursday, and receive their letters for enclosure, which he had duly done. It seems likely that he reopened his own letter on Saturday the 24th, and was expecting Reynolds on the Sunday. The adventure with the Bloomsbury lady probably took place on Saturday afternoon and was chronicled in the evening.

yesterday—it has been always my fate to meet Ollier there. On Thursday I walked with Hazlitt as far as Covent Garden : he was going to play Rackets. I think Tom has been rather better these few last days—he has been less nervous. I expect Reynolds to-morrow. Since I wrote thus far I have met with that same Lady again, whom I saw at Hastings and whom I met when we were going to the English Opera. It was in a street which goes from Bedford Row to Lamb's Conduit Street. —I passed her and turned back : she seemed glad of it—glad to see me, and not offended at my passing her before. We walked on towards Islington, where we called on a friend of her's who keeps a Boarding School. She has always been an enigma to me—she has been in a Room with you and Reynolds, and wishes we should be acquainted without any of our common acquaintance knowing it. As we went along, sometimes through shabby, sometimes through decent Streets I had my guessing at work, not knowing what it would be, and prepared to meet any surprise. First it ended at this House at Islington on parting from which I pressed to attend her home. She consented, and then again my thoughts were at work what it might lead to, tho' now they had received a sort of genteel hint from the Boarding School. Our Walk ended in 34 Gloucester Street, Queen Square—not exactly so, for we went up stairs into her sitting room, a very tasty sort of place with Books, Pictures, a bronze statue of Buonaparte, Music, aeolian Harp ; a Parrot, a Linnet, a Case of choice Liqueurs &c. &c. &c. She behaved in the kindest manner—made me take home a Grouse for Tom's dinner. Asked for my address for the purpose of sending more game. As I had warmed with her before and kissed her I thought it would be living backwards not to do so again—she had a better taste : she perceived how much a thing of course it was and shrunk from it—not in a prudish way but in as I say a good taste. She continued to disappoint me in a way which made me feel more pleasure than a simple kiss could do. She said I should please her much more if I would only press her hand and go away. Whether she was in a different disposition when I saw her before—or whether I have in fancy wrong'd her I cannot tell. I expect to pass some pleasant hours with her now and then : in which I feel I shall be of service to her in matters of knowledge and taste : if I can I will. I have no libidinous thought about her—she and your George are the only women *à peu près* de mon age whom I would be content to know for their mind and friendship alone.—I shall in a short time write you as far as I know how I intend to pass my Life—I cannot think of those things now Tom is so unwell and weak. Notwithstanding your Happiness and your recommendation I hope I shall never marry. Though the most beautiful Creature were waiting for me at the end of a Journey or a Walk ; though the

Carpet were of Silk, the Curtains of the morning Clouds ; the chairs and Sofa stuffed with Cygnet's down ; the food Manna, the Wine beyond Claret, the Window opening on Winander mere, I should not feel—or rather my Happiness would not be so fine, as my Solitude is sublime. Then instead of what I have described there is a sublimity to welcome me home. The roaring of the wind is my wife and the Stars through the window pane are my Children. The mighty abstract Idea I have of Beauty in all things stifles the more divided and minute domestic happiness—an amiable wife and sweet Children I contemplate as a part of that Beauty, but I must have a thousand of those beautiful particles to fill up my heart. I feel more and more every day, as my imagination strengthens, that I do not live in this world alone but in a thousand worlds. No sooner am I alone than shapes of epic greatness are stationed around me, and serve my Spirit the office which is equivalent to a King's body-guard—then 'Tragedy with sceptered pall comes sweeping by.'¹ According to my state of mind I am with Achilles shouting in the Trenches, or with Theocritus in the Vales of Sicily. Or I throw my whole being into Troilus, and repeating those lines, 'I wander like a lost Soul upon the Stygian Banks staying for waftage,'² I melt into the air with a voluptuousness so delicate that I am content to be alone. These things, combined with the opinion I have of the generality of women—who appear to me as children to whom I would rather give a sugar Plum than my time, form a barrier against Matrimony which I rejoice in.

I have written this that you might see I have my share of the highest pleasures and that though I may choose to pass my days alone I shall be no Solitary. You see there is nothing spleenical in all this. The only thing that can ever affect me personally for more than one short passing day, is any doubt about my powers for poetry—I seldom have any, and I look with hope to the nighing time when I shall have none. I am as happy as a Man can be—that is in myself I should be happy if Tom was well, and I knew you were passing pleasant days. Then I should be most enviable—with the yearning Passion I have for the beautiful, connected and made one with the ambi-

¹ Adapted from Milton's 'Il Penseroso':—

Some time let Gorgeous Tragedy
In Scepter'd Pall come sweeping by,
Presenting *Thebes*, or *Pelops* line,
Or the tale of *Troy* divine.

² 'Troilus and Cressida,' Act III, Scene ii:—

No *Pandarus* : I stalke about her doore
Like a strange soule upon the Stigian bankes
Staying for waftage.

tion of my intellect. Think of my Pleasure in Solitude in comparison of my commerce with the world—there I am a child—there they do not know me, not even my most intimate acquaintance—I give in to their feelings as though I were refraining from irritating a little child. Some think me middling, others silly, others foolish—every one thinks he sees my weak side against my will, when in truth it is with my will—I am content to be thought all this because I have in my own breast so great a resource. This is one great reason why they like me so; because they can all show to advantage in a room, and eclipse from a certain tact one who is reckoned to be a good Poet. I hope I am not here playing tricks¹ ‘to make the angels weep’: I think not: for I have not the least contempt for my species, and though it may sound paradoxical, my greatest elevations of soul leave me every time more humbled.—Enough of this—though in your Love for me you will not think it enough.²

Haslam has been here this morning and has taken all the Letters except this sheet, which I shall send him by the Twopenny, as he will put the Parcel in the Boston post Bag by the advice of Capper and Hazlewood, who assure him of the safety and expedition that way—the Parcel will be forwarded to Warder and thence to you all the same. There will not be a Philadelphia ship for these six weeks—by that time I shall have another Letter to you. Mind you I mark this letter A. By the time you will receive this you will have I trust passed through the greatest of your fatigues. As it was with your Sea Sickness I shall not hear of them till they are past. Do not set to your occupation with too great an anxiety—take it calmly—and let your health be the prime consideration. I hope you will have a Son, and it is one of my first wishes to have him in my Arms—which I will do please God before he cuts one double tooth. Tom is rather more easy than he has been: but is still so nervous that I cannot speak to him of these Matters—indeed it is the care I have had to keep his Mind aloof from feelings too acute that has made this letter so short a one—I did not like to write before him a Letter he knew was to reach your hands—I cannot even now ask him for any Message—his heart speaks to

¹ See ‘Measure for Measure,’ Act II, Scene ii:—

But man, proud man,
Drest in a little briefe authoritie...
Plays such phantastique tricks before high heaven
As makes the angels weepe...

² It is not clear how many days elapsed between the writing of this paragraph and that of the next. It seems likely that Keats wrote to the end of the letter on the day which he considered to be his birthday—whether the 29th or the 31st of October; but he may have written merely the postscript on that occasion.

you. Be as happy as you can. Think of me and for my sake be cheerful.

Believe me my dear Brother and Sister
Your anxious and affectionate Brother
John

This day¹ is my Birthday—

All our friends have been anxious in their enquiries and all send their remembrances.

LXXXII.

To FANNY KEATS.

Miss Tuckey's, Walthamstow.

[*Postmark*, Hampstead, 5 November 1818.]

My dear Fanny,

I have seen Mr. Abbey three times about you, and have not been able to get his consent. He says that once more between this and the Holydays will be sufficient. What can I do? I should have been at Walthamstow several times, but I am not able to leave Tom for so long a time as that would take me. Poor Tom has been rather better these 4 last days in consequence of obtaining a little rest at nights. Write to me as often as you can, and believe that I would do any thing to give you any pleasure—we must as yet wait patiently.

Your affectionate Brother

John —

LXXXIII.

To JAMES RICE.

Well Walk,

24 November 1818.

My dear Rice,

Your amende Honorable I must call "un surcroit d'Amitié," for I am not at all sensible of anything but that you were unfortunately engaged and I was unfortunately in a hurry. I completely understand your feeling in this mistake, and find in it that balance of comfort which remains after regretting your uneasiness. I have long made up my mind to take for granted the genuine-heartedness of my friends, notwithstanding any temporary ambiguousness in their behaviour or their tongues, nothing of which however I had the least scent of this morning. I say completely understand ; for I am everlastingly getting my

¹ According to the baptismal register of St. Botolph's Church, Bishopsgate, Keats was born on the 31st of October 1795 : some of his friends appear to have thought that his birthday was the 29th of October.

mind into such-like painful trammels—and am even at this moment suffering under them in the case of a friend of ours.—I will tell you two most unfortunate and parallel slips—it seems down-right pre-intention.—A friend¹ says to me, “Keats, I shall go and see Severn this week.”—“Ah! (says I) you want him to take your Portrait.”—And again, “Keats,” says a friend, “when will you come to town again?”—“I will,” says I, “let you have the MS. next week.” In both these cases I appeared to attribute an interested motive to each of my friends’ questions—the first made him flush, the second made him look angry :—and yet I am innocent in both cases ; my mind leapt over every interval, to what I saw was per se a pleasant subject with him. You see I have no allowances to make—you see how far I am from supposing you could show me any neglect. I very much regret the long time I have been obliged to exile from you : for I have one or two rather pleasant occasions to confer upon with you. What I have heard from George is favourable—I expect a letter from the Settlement itself.

Your sincere friend

John Keats.

I cannot give any good news of Tom.

LXXXIV.

To FANNY KEATS.

Miss Caley’s School, Walthamstow.

Tuesday Morn

[*Postmark*, Hampstead, 1 December 1818.]

My dear Fanny,

Poor Tom² has been so bad that I have delayed your visit hither—as it would be so painful to you both. I cannot say he is any better this morning—he is in a very dangerous state—I have scarce any hopes of him. Keep up your spirits for me my dear Fanny—repose entirely in

Your affectionate Brother

John.

¹I think this friend—the two slips clearly belong to one occasion—was Reynolds. Severn painted an admirable miniature of him.

²He died in the night of December 1-2, and was buried in the church of St. Stephen, Coleman Street, on the 7th of December 1818.

LXXXV.

TO GEORGE AND GEORGIANA KEATS.

[1818—19.]

My dear Brother and Sister,

You will have been prepared before this reaches you for the worst news you could have, nay, if Haslam's letter arrives in proper time, I have a consolation in thinking that the first shock will be past before you receive this. The last days of poor Tom were of the most distressing nature; but his last moments were not so painful, and his very last was without a pang. I will not enter into any parsonic comments on death—yet the common observations of the commonest people on death are true as their proverbs. I have scarce a doubt of immortality of some nature or other—neither had Tom. My friends have been exceedingly kind to me every one of them—Brown detained me at his House. I suppose no one could have had their time made smoother than mine has been. During poor Tom's illness I was not able to write and since his death the task of beginning has been a hindrance to me. Within this last Week I have been everywhere—and I will tell you as nearly as possible how all go on. With Dilke and Brown I am quite thick—with Brown indeed I am going to domesticate, that is, we shall keep house together. I shall have the front parlour and he the back one, by which I shall avoid the noise of Bentley's Children—and be the better able to go on with my studies—which have been greatly interrupted lately, so that I have not the shadow of an idea of a book in my head, and my pen seems to have grown too gouty for verse. How are you going on now? The goings on of the world makes me dizzy. There you are with Birkbeck—here I am with Brown—sometimes I fancy an immense separation, and sometimes as at present, a direct communication of Spirit with you. That will be one of the grandeurs of immortality. There will be no space, and consequently the only commerce between spirits will be by their intelligence of each other—when they

LXXXV. This letter must have been begun early in the latter half of December 1818, and finished on the 4th of January 1819. The holograph is one of the most important of those now fortunately accessible, although Mr. Speed does not seem to have seen it. Among the many unwarrantable interferences with the text, to which Keats's letters have been subjected, apparently through the bad offices of Mr. Jeffrey, few exceed in calm misrepresentation the substitution of the words "I have a firm belief in immortality, and so had Tom," in the copy furnished to Lord Houghton, for "I have scarce a doubt of immortality of some nature of [sic] other—neither had Tom." By the same authority the words lower down in the page "With Dilke and Brown I am quite thick—with Brown indeed I am going to domesticate," appear to have been altered into "I am going to domesticate with Brown."

will completely understand each other, while we in this world merely comprehend each other in different degrees—the higher the degree of good so higher is our Love and Friendship. I have been so little used to writing lately that I am afraid you will not smoke my meaning so I will give an example. Suppose Brown or Haslam or any one whom I understand in the next degree to what I do you, were in America, they would be so much the farther from me in proportion as their identity was less impressed upon me. Now the reason why I do not feel at the present moment so far from you is that I remember your Ways and Manners and actions; I know your manner of thinking, your manner of feeling; I know what shape your joy or your sorrow would take; I know the manner of you walking, standing, sauntering, sitting down, laughing, punning, and every action so truly that you seem near to me. You will remember me in the same manner—and the more when I tell you that I shall read a passage of Shakespeare every Sunday at ten o'clock—you read one at the same time, and we shall be as near each other as blind bodies can be in the same room. I saw your Mother the day before yesterday, and intend now frequently to pass half a day with her—she seem'd tolerably well. I called in Henrietta Street and so was speaking with your Mother about Miss Millar—we had a chat about Heiresses—she told me I think of 7 or eight dying Swains. Charles was not at home. I think I have heard a little more talk about Miss Keasle—all I know of her is she had a new sort of shoe on of bright leather like our Knapsacks. Miss Millar gave me one of her confounded pinches. N. B. did not like it. Mrs. Dilke went with me to see Fanny last week, and Haslam went with me last Sunday. She was well—she gets a little plumper and had a little Colour. On Sunday I brought from her a present of facescreens and a work bag for Mrs. D.—they were really very pretty. From Walthamstow we walked to Bethnal Green—where I felt so tired from my long walk that I was obliged to go to Bed at ten. Mr. and Mrs. Keasle were there. Haslam has been excessively kind, and his anxiety about you is great; I never meet him but we have some chat thereon. He is always doing me some good turn—he gave me this thin paper for the purpose of writing to you. I have been passing an hour this morning with Mr. Lewis—he wants news of you very much. Haydon was here yesterday—he amused us much by speaking of young Hop[p]ner who went with Captⁿ Ross on a voyage of discovery to the Poles. The Ship was sometimes entirely surrounded with vast mountains and crags of ice, and in a few Minutes not a particle was to be seen all round the Horizon. Once they met with so vast a Mass that they gave themselves over for lost; their last recourse was in meeting it with the Bowsprit, which they did, and split it

asunder and glided through it as it parted, for a great distance—one Mile and more. Their eyes were so fatigued with the eternal dazzle and whiteness that they lay down on their backs upon deck to relieve their sight on the blue sky. Hoppner describes his dreadful weariness at the continual day—the sun ever moving in a circle round above their heads—so pressing upon him that he could not rid himself of the sensation even in the dark Hold of the Ship. The Esquimaux are described as the most wretched of Beings—they float from their summer to their winter residences and back again like white Bears on the ice floats. They seem never to have washed, and so when their features move the red skin shows beneath the cracking peel of dirt. They had no notion of any inhabitants in the World but themselves. The sailors who had not seen a Star for some time, when they came again southwards on the hailing of the first revision of one all ran upon deck with feelings of the most joyful nature. Haydon's eyes will not suffer him to proceed with his Picture—his Physician tells him he must remain two months more, inactive. Hunt keeps on in his old way—I am completely tired of it all. He has lately publish'd a Pocket Book called the literary Pocket-Book—full of the most sickening stuff you can imagine. Reynolds is well—he has become an Edinburgh Reviewer. I have not heard from Bailey. Rice I have seen very little of lately—and I am very sorry for it. The Miss Rs are all as usual. Archer above all people called on me one day—he wanted some information by my means, from Hunt and Haydon, concerning some Man they knew. I got him what he wanted but know none of the whys and wherefores. Poor Kirkman left Wentworth place one evening about half past eight and was stopped, beaten and robbed of his Watch at Pond Street. I saw him a few days since—he had not recovered from his bruize. I called on Hazlitt the day I went to Romney Street—I gave John Hunt extracts from your letters—he has taken no notice. I have seen Lamb lately—Brown and I were taken by Hunt to Novello's—there we were devastated and excruciated with bad and repeated puns—Brown don't want to go again. We went the other evening to see Brutus a new Tragedy by Howard Payne, an American—Kean was excellent—the play was very bad. It is the first time I have been since I went with you to the Lyceum.

Mrs. Brawne who took Brown's house for the Summer still resides in Hampstead—she is a very nice woman—and her daughter senior is I think beautiful and elegant, graceful, silly, fashionable and strange—we have a little tiff now and then—and she behaves a little better, or I must have sheered off. I find by a sidelong report from your Mother that I am to be invited to Miss Millar's birthday dance. Shall I dance with

Miss Waldegrave? Eh! I shall be obliged to shirk a good many there. I shall be the only Dandy there—and indeed I merely comply with the invitation that the party may not be entirely destitute of a specimen of that race. I shall appear in a complete dress of purple, Hat and all—with a list of the beauties I have conquered embroidered round my Calves.

Thursday. This morning is so very fine, I should have walked over to Walthamstow if I had thought of it yesterday. What are you doing this morning? Have you a clear hard frost as we have? How do you come on with the gun? Have you shot a Buffalo? Have you met with any Pheasants? My thoughts are very frequently in a foreign Country—I live more out of England than in it. The Mountains of Tartary are a favorite lounge, if I happen to miss the Alleghany ridge, or have no whim for Savoy. There must be great pleasure in pursuing game—pointing your gun—no, it won't do—now—no—rabbit it—now bang—smoke and feathers—where is it? Shall you be able to get a good pointer or so? Have you seen Mr. Trimmer? He is an acquaintance of Peachey's. Now I am not addressing myself to G. minor—and yet I am, for you are one.¹ Have you some warm furs? By your next letter I shall expect to hear exactly how you go on—smother nothing—let us have all—fair and foul—all plain. Will the little bairn have made his entrance before you have this? Kiss it for me, and when it can first know a cheese from a Caterpillar show it my picture twice a Week. You will be glad to hear that Gifford's attack upon me has done me service—it has got my book among several *sets*. Nor must I forget to mention once more what I suppose Haslam has told you, the present of a £25 note I had anonymously sent me. I have many things to tell you—the best way will be to make copies of my correspondence; and I must not forget the Sonnet I received with the Note.—Last Week I received the following from Woodhouse whom you must recollect—"My dear Keats,—I send enclosed a Letter, which when read take the trouble to return to me. The History of its reaching me is this. My Cousin, Miss Frogley of Hounslow borrowed my copy of *Endymion* for a specified time. Before she had time to look into it, she and my friend Mr. Hy. Neville of Esher, who was house Surgeon to the late Princess Charlotte, insisted upon having it to read for a day or two, and undertook to make my Cousin's peace with me on account of the extra delay. Neville told me that one of the Misses Porter (of romance Celebrity) had seen it on his table, dipped into it, and expressed

¹ "G minor" would of course be his sister-in-law, Georgiana, whom he sometimes called "little George." Why he speaks of his brother as a minor at the end of 1818 I cannot explain. George was born on the 28th of February 1797, and was therefore nearly twenty-two years old.

"a wish to read it. I desired he should keep it as long and lend
 "it to as many as he pleased, provided it was not allowed to
 "slumber on any one's shelf. I learned subsequently from Miss
 "Frogley that these Ladies had requested of Mr. Neville, if
 "he was acquainted with the Author, the Pleasure of an
 "introduction. About a week back the enclosed was transmitted
 "by Mr. Neville to my Cousin, as a species of Apology for
 "keeping her so long without the Book and she sent it to me,
 "knowing that it would give me Pleasure—I forward it to you
 "for somewhat the same reason, but principally because it gives
 "me the opportunity of naming to you (which it would have
 "been fruitless to do before) the opening there is for an intro-
 "duction to a class of society from which you may possibly
 "derive advantage, as well as gratification, if you think proper
 "to avail yourself of it. In such a case I should be very happy
 "to further your Wishes. But do just as you please. The
 "whole is entirely *entre nous*—Your's &c. R. W." Well—now
 this is Miss Porter's Letter to Neville—"Dear Sir, as my Mother
 "is sending a Messenger to Esher, I cannot but make the same
 "the bearer of my regrets for not having had the pleasure of
 "seeing you the morning you called at the gate. I had given
 "orders to be denied, I was so very unwell with my still adhesive
 "cold; but had I known it was you I should have taken off the
 "interdict for a few minutes, to say how very much I am
 "delighted with 'Endymion.' I had just finished the Poem,
 "and have done as you permitted, lent it to Miss Fitzgerald. I
 "regret you are not personally acquainted with the Author, for I
 "should have been happy to have acknowledged to him, through
 "the advantage of your communication, the very rare delight
 "my sister and myself have enjoyed from the first fruits of
 "Genius. I hope the ill-natured review will not have damaged
 "(or damped)¹ such true Parnassian fire—it ought not, for when
 "Life is granted, &c."—and so she goes on. Now I feel more
 obliged than flattered by this—so obliged that I will not at
 present give you an extravaganza of a Lady Romancer. I will
 be introduced to them if it be merely for the pleasure of writing
 to you about it—I shall certainly see a new race of People. I
 shall more certainly have no time for them.

Hunt has asked me to meet Tom Moore some day—so you
 shall hear of him. The Night we went to Novello's there was a
 complete set-to of Mozart and punning. I was so completely
 tired of it that if I were to follow my own inclinations I should
 never meet any one of that set again, not even Hunt who is
 certainly a pleasant fellow in the main when you are with him—
 but in reality he is vain, egotistical, and disgusting in matters of

¹ Keats wrote both words as in the text, being, it would seem, uncertain which
 the lady meant. It is 'damped' in Woodhouse's transcript.

taste and in morals. He understands many a beautiful thing ; but then, instead of giving other minds credit for the same degree of perception as he himself professes—he begins an explanation in such a curious manner that our taste and self-love is offended continually. Hunt does one harm by making fine things petty and beautiful things hateful. Through him I am indifferent to Mozart, I care not for white Busts—and many a glorious thing when associated with him becomes a nothing. This distorts one's mind—makes one's thoughts bazarre—perplexes one in the standard of Beauty. Martin¹ is very much irritated against Blackwood for printing some letters in his Magazine which were Martin's property—he always found excuses for Blackwood till he himself was injured and now he is enraged. I have been several times thinking whether or not I should send you the Examiners as Birkbeck no doubt has all the good periodical Publications—I will save them at all events. I must not forget to mention how attentive and useful Mrs. Bentley has been—I am very sorry to leave her—but I must and I hope she will not be much a loser by it—Bentley is very well—he has just brought me a cloathes basket of Books.² Brown has gone to town to-day to take his Nephews who are on a visit here to see the Lions. I am passing a Quiet day—which I have not done for a long while—and if I do continue so, I feel I must again begin with my poetry—for if I am not in action mind or Body I am in pain—and from that I suffer greatly by going into parties where from the rules of society and a natural pride I am obliged to smother my Spirit and look like an Idiot—because I feel my impulses given way to would too much amaze them—I live under an everlasting restraint—never relieved except when I am composing—so I will write away.

Friday.—I think you knew before you left England, that my next subject would be “the fall of Hyperion.” I went on a little with it last night, but it will take some time to get into the vein again. I will not give you any extracts, because I wish the whole to make an impression. I have however a few Poems which you will like, and I will copy out on the next sheet. I shall dine with Haydon on Sunday and go over to Walthamstow on Monday if the frost hold. I think also of going into Hampshire this Christmas to Mr. Snook's—they say I shall be very much amused. But I don't know—I think I am in too huge a Mind for study—I must do it—I must wait at home and let those who wish come to see me. I cannot always be (how do you spell it?) trappings. Here I must tell you that I have not been able to keep the journal or write the Tale I promised—now

¹ See pages 34 and 48 *ante*.

² The picture of the postman moving Keats's library from Well Walk to Wentworth Place in a clothes-basket has a certain charm of its own.

I shall be able to do so. I will write to Haslam this morning to know when the Packet sails, and till it does I will write something every day. After that my journal shall go on like clock-work, and you must not complain of its dulness—for what I wish is to write a quantity to you—knowing well that dulness itself will from me be interesting to you. You may conceive how this not having been done has weighed upon me. I shall be able to judge from your next what sort of information will be of most service or amusement to you. Perhaps, as you were fond of giving me sketches of characters you may like a little picnic of scandal even across the Atlantic. But now I must speak particularly to you my dear Sister—for I know you love a little quizzing better than a great bit of apple dumpling. Do you know Uncle Redhall? He is a little man with an innocent powdered upright head, he lisps with a protruded underlip—he has two Nieces, each one would weigh three of him—one for height and the other for breadth—he knew Bartolozzi. He gave a supper and ranged his bottles of wine all up the Kitchen and cellar stairs—quite ignorant of what might be drank—it might have been a good joke to pour on the sly bottle after bottle into a washing tub and roar for more. If you were to trip him up it would discompose a Pigtail and bring his under lip nearer to his nose. He never had the good luck to lose a silk Handkerchief in a Crowd and therefore has only one topic of conversation—Bartolozzi. Shall I give you Miss Brawne?¹ She is about my height—with a fine style of countenance of the lengthened sort—she wants sentiment in every feature—she manages to make her hair look well—her nostrils are fine—though a little painful—her mouth is bad and good—her Profile is better than her full-face which indeed is not full but pale and thin without showing any bone. Her shape is very graceful and so are her movements—her Arms are good, her hands bad-ish—her feet tolerable—she is not seventeen—but she is ignorant—monstrous in her behaviour, flying out in all directions, calling people such names—that I was forced lately to make use of the term *Minx*—this is I think not from any innate vice but from a penchant she has for acting stylishly. I am however tired of such style and

¹I have been assured by members of Miss Brawne's family that the description answers to the facts in every particular except that of age: the correct expression would be "not nineteen"; but Keats might naturally enough have made a mistake on such a point. When he wrote this passage, he was, I should judge, feeling a certain resentment analogous to what found a much more tender expression in the first letter of the series addressed to Miss Brawne, when the circumstances made increased tenderness a matter of course,—a resentment of the feeling that he was becoming enslaved. Mr. Dilke, in his copy of the 'Life, Letters' &c., wrote regarding the friend who came "to visit her," "Qy. a Miss Robinson." The passage in which that name occurs had not then been published; but the suggestion seems to make it certain that Keats and Brown were still on the subject of the same lady when Keats began his ten minutes' groan in bed.

shall decline any more of it. She had a friend to visit her lately—you have known plenty such—her face is raw as if she was standing out in a frost—her lips raw and seem always ready for a Pullet—she plays the Music¹ without one sensation but the feel of the ivory at her fingers. She is a downright Miss without one set-off. We hated her and smoked her and baited her and I think drove her away. Miss B. thinks her a Paragon of fashion, and says she is the only woman she would change persons with. What a stupe—She is superior as a Rose to a Dandelion. When we went to bed Brown observed as he put out the Taper what a very ugly old woman that Miss Robinson would make—at which I must have groaned aloud for I'm sure ten minutes. I have not seen the thing Kingston² again—George will describe him to you—I shall insinuate some of these Creatures into a Comedy some day—and perhaps have Hunt among them.—Scene, a little Parlour—Enter Hunt—Gattie—Hazlitt—Mrs. Novello—Ollier. *Gattie* :—Ha! Hunt got into your new house? Ha! Mrs. Novello: seen Altam and his wife? *Mrs. N.* Yes (with a grin), it's Mr. Hunt's isn't it? *Gattie* : Hunt's? no, ha! Mr. Ollier, I congratulate you upon the highest compliment I ever heard paid to the Book. Mr. Hazlitt, I hope you are well. *Hazlitt* :—Yes Sir, no Sir—*Mr. Hunt* (at the Music) “La Biondina” &c.—Hazlitt, did you ever hear this?—“La Biondina” &c. *Hazlitt* :—O no Sir—I never—*Ollier* :—Do Hunt give it us over again—divine—*Gattie* : divino—Hunt when does your Pocket-Book come out—*Hunt* :—“What is this absorbs me quite?” O we are spinning on a little, we shall floridize soon I hope. Such a thing was very much wanting—people think of nothing but money getting—now for me I am rather inclined to the liberal side of things. I am reckoned lax in my christian principles &c. &c. &c. &c.

It is some days since I wrote the last page—and what have I been about since I have no Idea—I dined at Haslam's on Sunday—with Haydon yesterday and saw Fanny in the morning

¹ The expression ‘the music’ for ‘the piano-forte’ looks strange now; but it was probably current in the middle class in Keats's day. He uses it in the 1817 volume of poems when describing Charles Cowden Clarke at the piano-forte (see Volume I, page 38):

But many days have passed since last my heart
Was warm'd luxuriously by divine Mozart;
By Arne delighted, or by Handel madden'd;
Or by the song of Erin pierc'd and sadden'd;
What time you were before the music sitting,
And the rich notes to each sensation fitting.

See also lower down in the text, “*Mr. Hunt* (at the Music).”

² The Commissioner of Stamps mentioned more than once before—the man insulted by Lamb (when tipsy) at Haydon's “immortal dinner party.” See pages 52 and 53 *ante*.

—she was well—Just now I took out my poem to go on with it—but the thought of my writing so little to you came upon me and I could not get on—so I have begun at random and I have not a word to say—and yet my thoughts are so full of you that I can do nothing else. I shall be confined at Hampstead a few days on account of a sore throat—the first thing I do will be to visit your Mother again. The last time I saw Henry he show'd me his first engraving which I thought capital.¹ Mr. Lewis called this morning and brought some American Papers—I have not look'd into them—I think we ought to have heard of you before this—I am in daily expectation of Letters—Nil desperandum. Mrs. Abbey wishes to take Fanny from School—I shall strive all I can against that. There has happened a great Misfortune in the Drewe Family—old Drewe has been dead some time; and lately George Drewe expired in a fit—on which account Reynolds has gone into Devonshire. He dined a few days since at Horace Twisse's [*sic* for 'Twiss's'] with Liston and Charles Kemble. I see very little of him now, as I seldom go to Little Britain because the Ennui always seizes me there, and John Reynolds is very dull at home. Nor have I seen Rice. How you are now going on is a Mystery to me—I hope a few days will clear it up. I never know the day of the Month. It is very fine here to-day though I expect a Thundercloud or rather a snow cloud in less than an hour. I am at present alone at Wentworth place—Brown being at Chichester and Mr. and Mrs. Dilke making a little stay in Town. I know not what I should do without a sunshiny morning now and then—it clear's up one's spirits. Dilke and I frequently have some chat about you. I have now and then some doubt, but he seems to have a great confidence. I think there will soon be perceptible a change in the fashionable slang literature of the day—it seems to me that Reviews have had their day—that the public have been surfeited—there will soon be some new folly to keep the Parlours in talk. What it is I care not. We have seen three literary Kings in our Time—Scott—Byron—and then the Scotch novels.² All now appears to be dead—or I may mistake—literary Bodies may still keep up the Bustle which I do not hear. Haydon show'd me a letter he had received from Tripoli—Ritchie was well and in good Spirits, among Camels, Turbans, Palm Trees and Sands.—You may remember I promised to send him an Endymion which I did not—however he has one—you have one.—One is in

¹ How far Henry Wylie pursued the art of engraving, or in what kind, I have no information: his name is not recorded in Redgrave's Dictionary of Artists of the English School (1874); nor have I found it in any other book of reference.

² It is an interesting point that Keats, at all events, had not fathomed Sir Walter Scott's secret; and it will be seen later on (page 206) that the arch-critic Hazlitt was in the same case.

the Wilds of America—the other is on a Camel's back in the plains of Egypt. I am looking into a book of Dubois'—he has written direction to the players—one of them is very good, "In singing never mind the music—observe what time you please. It would be a pretty degradation indeed if you were obliged to confine your genius to the dull regularity of a fiddler—horse hair and cat's guts—no, let him keep *your* time and play *your* tune—*dodge him*."¹ I will now copy out the Letter and Sonnet I have spoken of. The outside cover was thus directed, "Messrs. Taylor and Hessey (Booksellers), No. 93 Fleet Street, London," and it contained this: "Messrs. Taylor and Hessey are requested to forward the enclosed letter by some *safe* mode of conveyance to the Author of *Endymion*, who is not known at Teignmouth: or if they have not his address, they will return the letter by post, directed as below, within a *fortnight*. 'Mr. P. Fenbank, P. O., Teignmouth,' 9th Nov., 1818." In this sheet was enclosed the following, with a superscription—"Mr. John Keats, Teignmouth." Then came Sonnet to John Keats—which I could not copy for any in the world but you—who know that I scout "mild light and loveliness" or any such nonsense in myself.

Star of high promise!—not to this dark age
 Do thy mild light and loveliness belong;
 For it is blind, intolerant, and wrong;
 Dead to empyreal soarings, and the rage
 Of scoffing spirits bitter war doth wage
 With all that bold integrity of song.
 Yet thy clear beam shall shine through ages strong
 To ripest times a light and heritage.
 And there breathe now who dote upon thy fame,
 Whom thy wild numbers wrap beyond their being,
 Who love the freedom of thy lays—their aim
 Above the scope of a dull tribe unseeing—
 And there is one whose hand will never scant,
 From his poor store of fruits all *thou* canst want.
 turn over

November, 1818.

I turn'd over, and found a £25 note. Now this appears to me

¹ It seems probable that this extract is from one of the many ephemeral works of the witty man about town Edward Dubois now almost totally forgotten; and it can hardly be doubted that this was the "one Du Bois" whom Keats met at Horace Smith's as recorded at page 50 *ante*. Dubois figures in Cyrus Redding's 'Fifty Years' Recollections, Literary and Personal' (Volume II, pages 161 to 165) as a man quite after the hearts of the Smith brothers. He appears to have edited the 'Monthly Mirror,' to which they both contributed, and to have been sufficiently *lié* with John Taylor on the one hand and Sir Philip Francis on the other to give colour to the insinuation that he wrote those works on the Identity of Junius which Taylor absolutely denies him any part or lot in. Taylor is of course to be believed.

all very proper—if I had refused it I should have behaved in a very braggadocio dunderheaded manner—and yet the present galls me a little, and I do not know whether I shall not return it if I ever meet with the donor, after whom to no purpose have I written. I have your Miniature on the Table George the great—it's very like—though not quite about the upper lip. I wish we had a better of you, little George. I must not forget to tell you that a few days since I went with Dilke a shooting on the heath and shot a Tomtit. There were as many guns abroad as Birds. I intended to have been at Chichester this Wednesday—but on account of this sore throat I wrote him (Brown) my excuse yesteday.

Thursday. I will date when I finish—I received a note from Haslam yesterday—asking if my letter is ready—now this is only the second sheet—notwithstanding all my promises. But you must reflect what hindrances I have had. However on sealing this I shall have nothing to prevent my proceeding in a gradual journal which will increase in a Month to a considerable size. I will insert any little pieces I may write—though I will not give any extracts from my large poem which is scarce began.¹ I want to hear very much whether Poetry and literature in general has gained, or lost interest with you—and what sort of writing is of the highest gust with you now. With what sensation do you read Fielding?—and do not Hogarth's pictures seem an old thing to you? Yet you are very little more removed from general association than I am—recollect that no Man can live but in one society at a time—his enjoyment in the different states of human society must depend upon the Powers of his Mind—that is you can imagine a Roman triumph or an Olympic game as well as I can. We with our bodily eyes see but the fashion and Manners of one country for one age—and then we die. Now to me manners and customs long since passed whether among the Babylonians or the Bactrians are as real, or even more real than those among which I now live. My thoughts have turned lately this way. The more we know the more inadequacy we find in the world to satisfy us—this is an old observation; but I have made up my Mind never to take anything for granted—but even to examine the truth of the commonest proverbs. This however is true—Mrs. Tighe and Beattie once delighted me—now I see through them and can find nothing in them or weakness, and yet how many they still delight! Perhaps a superior being may look upon Shakespeare in the same light—is it possible? No—This same inadequacy is discovered (forgive me little George—you know I don't mean to put you in the mess) in Women with few exceptions—the Dress Maker, the blue Stocking and the most charming senti-

¹ This is 'Hyperion' that he describes as "scarce began." See page 196 *ante*.

mentalist differ but in a slight degree and are equally smokeable. But I'll go no further—I may be speaking sacrilegiously—and on my word I have thought so little that I have not one opinion upon anything except in matters of taste—I never can feel certain of any truth, but from a clear perception of its Beauty—and I find myself very young minded even in that perceptive power—which I hope will increase. A year ago I could not understand in the slightest degree Raphael's Cartoons—now I begin to read them a little. And how did I learn to do so? By seeing something done in quite an opposite spirit—I mean a picture of Guido's in which all the Saints, instead of that heroic simplicity and unaffected grandeur which they inherit from Raphael, had each of them both in countenance and gesture all the canting, solemn, melodramatic mawkishness of Mackenzie's father Nicholas. When I was last at Haydon's I looked over a Book of Prints taken from the fresco of the Church at Milan, the name of which I forget—in it are comprised Specimens of the first and second age of Art in Italy. I do not think I ever had a greater treat out of Shakspeare. Full of romance and the most tender feeling—magnificence of draperies beyond everything I ever saw, not excepting Raphael's. But Grotesque to a curious pitch—yet still making up a fine whole—even finer to me than more accomplish'd works—as there was left so much room for Imagination. I have not heard one of this last course of Hazlitt's Lectures. They were upon 'Wit and Humour,' 'the English Comic Writers.'

Saturday Jan' 2nd [1819]. Yesterday Mr. and Mrs. D. and myself dined at Mrs. Brawne's—nothing particular passed. I never intend hereafter to spend any time with ladies unless they are handsome—you lose time to no purpose. For that reason I shall beg leave to decline going again to Redhall's or Butler's or any Squad where a fine feature cannot be mustered among them all—and where all the evening's amusement consists in saying your good health, *your* good health, and *YOUR* good health—and (O I beg your pardon) yours Miss — — and such thing [sic] not even dull enough to keep me awake. With respect to amiable speaking I can read—let my eyes be fed or I'll never go out to dinner anywhere. Perhaps you may have heard of the dinner given to Thos. Moore in Dublin, because I have the account here by me in the Philadelphia democratic paper. The most pleasant thing that occurred was the speech Mr. Tom made on his Father's health being drank. I am afraid a great part of my Letters are filled up with promises and what I will do rather than any great deal written—but here I say once for all—that circumstances prevented me from keeping my promise in my last, but now I affirm that as there will be nothing to hinder me I will keep a journal for you. That I have not yet done so you would forgive if you knew how many hours I have been repenting of my

neglect. For I have no thought pervading me so constantly and frequently as that of you—my Poem cannot frequently drive it away—you will retard it much more than you could by taking up my time if you were in England. I never forget you except after seeing now and then some beautiful woman—but that is a fever—the thought of you both is a passion with me but for the most part a calm one. I asked Dilke for a few lines for you—he has promised them—I shall send what I have written to Haslam on Monday Morning—what I can get into another sheet to-morrow I will—there are one or two little poems you might like. I have given up snuff very nearly quite—Dilke has promised to sit with me this evening—I wish he would come this minute for I want a pinch of snuff very much just now—I have none though in my own snuff box. My sore throat is much better to-day—I think I might venture on a pinch. Here are the Poems—they will explain themselves—as all poems should do without any comment—

Ever let the Fancy roam,
Pleasure never is at home.
At a touch sweet pleasure melteth
Like to bubbles when rain pelteth :
Then let winged fancy wander
Towards heaven still spread beyond her—
Open wide the mind's cage door
She'll dart forth and cloudward soar.
O sweet Fancy, let her loose !
Summer's joys are spoilt by use,
And the enjoying of the spring
Fades as doth its blossoming :
Autumn's red-lipp'd fruitage too
Blushing through the mist and dew
Cloys with kissing. What do then ?
Sit thee in an ingle when
The sear faggot blazes bright,
Spirit of a winter night ;
When the soundless earth is muffled,
And the caked snow is shuffled
From the Ploughboy's heavy shoon :
When the night doth meet the noon
In a dark conspiracy
To banish vespèr from the sky.
Sit thee then and send abroad
With a Mind self overaw'd
Fancy high commission'd ; send her,—
She'll have vassals to attend her—
She will bring thee, spite of frost,
Beauties that the Earth has lost ;
She will bring thee all together

All delights of summer weather ;
All the faery buds of May
On spring turf or scented spray ;
All the heaped Autumn's wealth
With a still mysterious stealth ;
She will mix these pleasures up
Like three fit wines in a cup
And thou shalt quaff it—Thou shalt hear
Distant harvest carols clear,
Rustle of the reaped corn
Sweet Birds antheming the Morn ;
And, in the same moment hark
To the early April lark,
Or the rooks with busy caw
Forraging for sticks and straw.
Thou shalt at one glance behold
The daisy and the marigold ;
White plumed lillies and the first
Hedgerow primrose that hath burst ;
Shaded Hyacinth alway
Sapphire Queen of the Mid-may ;
And every leaf and every flower
Pearled with the same soft shower.
Thou shalt see the fieldmouse creep
Meagre from its celled sleep,
And the snake all winter shrank
Cast its skin on sunny bank ;
Freckled nest eggs thou shalt see
Hatching in the hawthorn tree ;
When the hen bird's wing doth rest
Quiet on its mossy nest—
Then the hurry and alarm
When the Beehive casts its swarm—
Acorns ripe down pattering
While the autumn breezes sing,
For the same sleek throated mouse
To store up in its winter house.

O sweet Fancy, let her loose !
Every joy is spoilt by use,
Every pleasure, every joy—
Not a Mistress but doth cloy.
Where's the cheek that doth not fade
Too much gaz'd at ? Where's the Maid
Whose lip mature is ever new ?
Where's the eye however blue
Doth not weary ? Where's the face
One would meet in every place ?
Where's the voice however soft

One would hear too oft and oft?
 At a touch sweet pleasure melteth
 Like to bubbles when rain pelteth.
 Let then winged fancy find
 Thee a Mistress to thy mind.
 Dulcet-eyed as Ceres' daughter
 Ere the God of torment taught her
 How to frown and how to chide:
 With a waist and with a side
 White as Hebe's when her Zone
 Slipp'd its golden clasp, and down
 Fell her Kirtle to her feet
 While she held the goblet sweet,
 And Jove grew languid. Mistress fair!
 Thou shalt have that tressed hair
 Adonis tangled all for spite,
 And the mouth he would not kiss
 And the treasure he would miss;
 And the hand he would not press
 And the warmth he would distress.

O the Ravishment—the Bliss!
 Fancy has her there she is—
 Never fulsome, ever new,
 There she steps! and tell me who
 Has a Mistress so divine?
 Be the palate ne'er so fine
 She cannot sicken.

Break the Mesh
 Of the Fancy's silken leash
 Where she's tether'd to the heart.
 Quickly break her prison string
 And such joys as these she'll bring
 Let the winged fancy roam
 Pleasure never is at home.

I did not think this had been so long a Poem. I have another not so long—but as it will more conveniently be copied on the other side I will just put down here some observations on Caleb Williams by Hazlitt—I meant to say St. Leon, for although he has mentioned all the Novels of Godwin very freely I do not quote them, but this only on account of its being a specimen of his usual abrupt manner, and fiery laconicism. He says of St. Leon “He is a limb torn off society. In possession of eternal youth and beauty he can feel no love; surrounded, tantalized and tormented with riches, he can do no good. The faces of Men pass before him as in a speculum; but he is attached to them by no common tie of sympathy or suffering. He is thrown back into himself and his own thoughts. He

“lives in the solitude of his own breast—without wife or child
“or friend or Enemy in the world. *This is the solitude of the*
“*soul, not of woods or trees or mountains*—but the desert of
“society—the waste and oblivion of the heart. He is himself
“alone. His existence is purely intellectual, and is therefore
“intolerable to one who has felt the rapture of affection, or the
“anguish of woe.” As I am about it I might as well give you
his character of Godwin as a Romancer—“Whoever else is, it
“is pretty clear that the author of Caleb Williams is not the
“Author of Waverley. Nothing can be more distinct or ex-
“cellent in their several ways than these two writers. If the
“one owes almost everything to external observations and
“traditional character, the other owes everything to internal
“conception and contemplation of the possible workings of the
“human Mind. There is little knowledge of the world, little
“variety, neither an eye for the picturesque nor a talent for the
“humorous in Caleb Williams, for instance, but you cannot
“doubt for a moment of the originality of the work and the
“force of the conception. The impression made upon the
“reader is the exact measure of the strength of the author’s
“genius. For the effect both in Caleb Williams and St. Leon is
“entirely made out, not by facts nor dates, by blackletter, or
“magazine learning, by transcript nor record, but by intense and
“patient study of the human heart, and by an imagination
“projecting itself into certain situations, and capable of working
“up its imaginary feelings to the height of reality.” This
appears to me quite correct. Now I will copy the other Poem
—it is on the double immortality of Poets—

Bards of Passion and of Mirth
Ye have left your souls on earth—
Have ye souls in heaven too
Double liv’d in regions new?
Yes—and those of heaven commune
With the spheres of Sun and Moon;
With the noise of fountains wondrous,
And the parle of voices thundrous;
With the Whisper of heaven’s trees,
And one another, in soft ease
Seated on elysian Lawns,
Browsed by none but Dian’s fawns;
Underneath large bluebells tented
Where the daisies are rose scented,
And the rose herself has got
Perfume which on Earth is not.
Where the nightingale doth sing
Not a senseless tranced thing;
But melodious truth divine
Philosophic numbers fine;

Tales and golden histories
 Of Heaven and its Mysteries.
 Thus ye live on Earth¹ and then
 On the Earth ye live again ;
 And the souls ye left behind you
 Teach us here the way to find you,
 Where your other Souls are joying
 Never slumber'd, never cloying.
 Here your earth born souls still speak
 To mortals of the little week
 They must sojourn with their cares ;
 Of their sorrows and delights
 Of their Passions and their spites ;
 Of their glory and their shame—
 What doth strengthen and what maim.
 Thus ye teach us every day
 Wisdom though fled far away.
 Bards of Passion and of Mirth,
 Ye have left your Souls on Earth
 Ye have souls in heaven too
 Double liv'd in Regions new !

These are specimens of a sort of rondeau which I think I shall become partial to—because you have one idea amplified with greater ease and more delight and freedom than in the sonnet. It is my intention to wait a few years before I publish any minor poems—and then I hope to have a volume of some worth—and which those people will relish who cannot bear the burthen of a long poem. In my journal I intend to copy the poems I write the days they are written—there is just room I see in this page to copy a little thing I wrote off to some Music as it was playing²—

I had a dove and the sweet dove died,
 And I have thought it died of grieving :
 O what could it grieve for ? it was tied
 With a silken thread of my own hand's weaving.
 Sweet little red-feet why did you die ?
 Why would you leave me—sweet dove why ?
 You liv'd³ alone in the forest tree.
 Why pretty thing could you not live with me ?
 I kiss'd you oft and gave you white peas—
 Why not live sweetly as in the green trees ?

¹ Probably a clerical error for 'high' : see page 113 of Volume II.

² It was possibly Miss Charlotte Reynolds who played the tune on the piano-forte : see Volume III, page 13, foot-note.

³ Keats accented instead of eliding the *e* : no doubt he intended 'lived' to be one syllable.

Sunday [3 January 1819]. I have been dining with Dilke to day.—He is up to his Ears in Walpole's letters. Mr. Manker¹ is there, and I have come round to see if I can conjure up anything for you. Kirkman came down to see me this morning—his family has been very badly off lately. He told me of a villainous trick of his Uncle William in Newgate Street who became sole Creditor to his father under pretence of serving him, and put an execution on his own Sister's goods. He went in to the family at Portsmouth; conversed with them, went out and sent in the Sheriff's officer. He tells me too of abominable behaviour of Archer to Caroline Mathew—Archer has lived nearly at the Mathews these two years; he has been amusing Caroline—and now he has written a Letter to Mrs. M. declining, on pretence of inability to support a wife as he would wish, all thoughts of marriage. What is the worst is Caroline is 27 years old. It is an abominable matter. He has called upon me twice lately—I was out both times. What can it be for?—There is a letter to-day in the Examiner to the Electors of Westminster on Mr. Hobhouse's account. In it there is a good character of Cobbett—I have not the paper by me or I would copy it. I do not think I have mentioned the discovery of an African Kingdom—the account is much the same as the first accounts of Mexico—all magnificence—there is a Book being written about it. I will read it and give you the cream in my next. The romance we have heard upon it runs thus: They have window frames of gold—100,000 infantry—human sacrifices. The Gentleman who is the Adventurer has his wife with him—she, I am told, is a beautiful little sylphid woman—her husband was to have been sacrificed to their Gods and was led through a Chamber filled with different instruments of torture with privilege to choose what death he would die, without their having a thought of his aversion to such a death—they considering it a supreme distinction. However he was let off and became a favourite with the King who at last openly patronized him, though at first on account of the Jealousy of his Ministers he was wont to hold conversations with his Majesty in the dark middle of the night. All this sounds a little Blue-beardish—but I hope it is true. There is another thing I must mention of the momentous kind;—but I must mind my periods in it—Mrs. Dilke has two Cats—a Mother and a Daughter—now the Mother is a tabby and the daughter a black and white like the spotted child. Now it appears to me, for the doors of both houses are opened frequently, so that there is a complete thoroughfare for both Cats (there being no board up to the con-

¹ "Mr. Manker" is probably the person mentioned as "Manour" in the long letter of the following Spring, just after the Spenserian Stanzas on Brown. See Volume V.

trary), they may one and several of them come into my room ad libitum. But no—the Tabby only comes—whether from sympathy for Ann the Maid or me I cannot tell—or whether Brown has left behind him atmospheric spirit of Maidenhood I cannot tell. The Cat is not an old Maid herself—her daughter is a proof of it—I have questioned her—I have look'd at the lines of her paw—I have felt her pulse—to no purpose. Why should the *old* Cat come to me? I ask myself—and myself has not a word to answer. It may come to light some day; if it does you shall hear of it.

Kirkman this morning promised to write a few lines to you and send them to Haslam. I do not think I have anything to say in the Business way. You will let me know what you would wish done with your property in England—what things you would wish sent out—but I am quite in the dark about what you are doing—if I do not hear soon I shall put on my wings and be after you. I will in my next, and after I have seen your next letter, tell you my own particular idea of America. Your next letter will be the key by which I shall open your hearts and see what spaces want filling with any particular information. Whether the affairs of Europe are more or less interesting to you—whether you would like to hear of the Theatres—of the bear Garden—of the Boxers—the Painters, the Lectures—the Dress—the progress of Dandyism—the progress of Courtship—or the fate of Mary Miller—being a full, true, and très particular account of Miss M's ten Suitors—how the first tried the effect of swearing; the second of stammering; the third of whispering;—the fourth of sonnets—the fifth of Spanish leather boots;—the sixth of flattering her body—the seventh of flattering her mind—the eighth of flattering himself—the ninth stuck to the Mother—the tenth kissed the Chambermaid and told her to tell her Mistress—But he was soon discharged, his reading lead him into an error—he could not sport the Sir Lucius¹ to any advan-

¹ I hardly know to what extent the allusion to Sir Lucius O'Trigger will miss fire nowadays. It depends upon the amount of the reader's familiarity with Sheridan's brilliant and delightful comedy 'The Rivals,' in which that worthy Irish fortune-hunter plays so prominent a part, and shows so strong a *penchant* for fighting as to make his name difficult to disassociate from the subject of the duel. Although 'The Rivals' ranks according to Mr. Archer with but two other plays outside Shakespeare's which were in vogue at the beginning of last century and still hold the stage, it is not every reader of the present volumes who, even if he is a playgoer, favours the classical drama. To Keats's generation, at all events, to 'sport the Sir Lucius' meant much more than it can to ours, inasmuch that another poet of that generation, educated at the same school as Keats and his brothers, used the name as the most natural of transparent disguise in editing a history of duelling. This little book, edited by R. H. Horne and published by Messrs. Newman & Co., purports to be translated from the French of Coustard de Massi, "With Introduction and Concluding Chapter by Sir Lucius O'Trigger." Messrs. Newman & Co. were a short-lived firm among whose virtues was that of at

tage. And now for this time I bid you good bye—I have been thinking of these sheets so long that I appear in closing them to take my leave of you—but that is not it—I shall immediately as I send this off begin my journal—when some days I shall write no more than 10 lines and others 10 times as much. Mrs. Dilke is knocking at the wall for Tea is ready—I will tell you what sort of a tea it is and then bid you—Good bye.—This is monday morning¹—nothing particular happened yesterday evening, except that when the tray came up Mrs. Dilke and I had a battle with celery stalks—she sends her love to you. I shall close this and send it immediately to Haslam—remaining ever

My dearest brother and sister

Your most affectionate Brother

John—

least professing to sell no copies of a work which had not been initialled by the author and so giving him a chance to check the number sold; and I have in my possession a copy of this duelling book bearing in Horne's writing the motto "Tell it not in Gath—1800," and on the title-page, by way of author's certificate, in the same writing, "L. O'T." Those who have read the memoir prefixed to Volume I of this edition will at once identify with this 'L. O'T.' the hero of the snow-ball story which Horne delighted to tell to the end of his long life.

¹ The 4th of January 1819.

End of Volume IV.

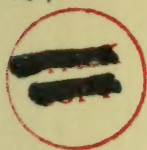
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